

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND EDUCATION

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**NEPALESE STUDENTS' REFLECTIONS ON UK UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION**

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This thesis analyses the reflections on UK university Business Studies courses of Nepalese graduates who choose to return home to Nepal after graduating. It considers the personal and cultural influences on educational decision-making that led them to choosing to study in the UK and their post-graduation employment expectations. The primary research was undertaken at a time when UK universities were facing increasing competition to recruit international students and numbers of Nepalese students choosing to study in the UK had dropped. In addition, Nepalese graduates choosing to return home were faced with scarcity of employment opportunities due to political uncertainty and improvements to local higher education.

The qualitative, inductive research was based on semi-structured interviews which took place in Nepal with twenty-three Nepalese graduates, their Nepalese employers and Nepalese education consultancies. Data was analysed using the ecological, five systems model of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) Intercultural Awareness Profiling (IAP) of graduates. In addition to identifying five major themes and associate themes, the findings extend beyond existing "push-pull" models by identifying how a graduate's understanding of cultural orientation affects their decision-making.

Although the overall expectations of Nepalese students and employers towards UK higher education remain positive, results indicated a lowering in their estimation of the quality and reputation of UK universities. The outcomes of the research make a valuable contribution to the knowledge of how and why international, specifically Nepalese, students choose overseas higher education. The findings also establish why Nepalese employers are struggling to see clear benefits from employing UK educated Nepalese business graduates.

Recommendations are made for changes to be implemented to business studies courses to help university practitioners better meet the needs and expectations of future Nepalese students, graduates and employers. These recommendations reflect a deeper understanding of educational decision-making of international students.

Key words: Nepal, Educational decision-making theory, University business studies

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Glossary

BIS	Department of Business Innovation and Skills
CPN (UML)	The Communist Party of Nepal
CTEP	Commonwealth Teacher Exchange Programme
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPA	Grade Point Average
HDI	Human Development Index
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEPI-HEA	Higher Education Policy Institute -Higher Education Academy
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IAP	Intercultural Awareness Profile
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
MAC	Migration Advisory Commission
MESDCs	Mainly English-Speaking Destination Countries
NCEP	The National Children's Education Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
Non-EU	Refers to 'International' students from outside the EU
NUGC	Nepalese University Grants Commission
NVivo	NVivo. Qualitative data analysis software
UCPN	Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
UK	United Kingdom
UKCISA	UK Council for International Student Affairs
UKCOSA	The Council for International Education
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United National Development Programme

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This thesis analyses Nepalese students' reflections on UK university business studies courses and considers the influences on the educational decision-making of Nepalese business studies graduates and their expectations for employment. The research included the perspectives of Nepalese employers and education consultancies. No previous research has been found that relates directly to Nepalese decision-making processes involved in choosing to study at an overseas university, nor of employment outcomes of Nepalese graduates after studying business at a UK university. In the period (2011/12 to 2015/16) the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (2017) recorded over 7,000 Nepalese students coming to UK universities to study for either undergraduate or postgraduate degrees.

These numbers are against a background of over 172,00 international (non-EU) degree students coming to the UK in 2015/16. HESA (2017) recorded only 870 Nepalese degree students coming to the UK in 2015/16 compared to over 60, 000 Nepalese students who travelled to the USA in the same period. Hence, the number of Nepalese students studying in the UK is modest in comparison to students from many other countries. The 2015/16 statistics represent a decline of 46% (HESA, 2017) over the previous year in the number of Nepalese students enrolled into UK universities. What is more, there was an increase of 18% (International Institute of Education, 2017) in the number of Nepalese students entering US universities over a comparable period.

In the latest published figures, Nepal “is forecast to be one of the main sources of future growth in outbound tertiary students” (British Council, 2012, p. 5). Attracting international students is recognised as important by the UK Government for financial and cultural reasons. However, what is still unknown is whether the UK Government’s electoral promise in 2017, of a commitment to reducing net migration to the UK from hundreds of thousands to tens of thousands per annum, is inclusive or exclusive of international student numbers. It is also not clear whether, after the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union (Brexit), any specified international student numbers will be counted as including or excluding EU (not UK) as well as non-EU students.

In 2017 Universities UK has established setting up a new working group (Bell Review) to examine the current higher education sector agency and provide advice on how the work of the agencies can continue to effectively support the sector into the future of higher education recommended the setting up of a new agency that would, “develop services and relationships with the UK higher education sector that are innovative, strategically important and flexible and will be better able to meet the rapidly changing needs of a diverse set of higher education providers” (Universities UK, 2017a, p. 1). In August 2017 the UK Home Secretary confirmed Government policy towards international students in a letter commissioning the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to assess the impact of international students in the UK (Gov.uk, 2017a, p. 1):

“The (UK) Government strongly wishes to continue to attract international students to study in the UK. We recognise that they enhance our educational institutions both financially and culturally; they enrich the experience of domestic students; and they become important ambassadors for the United Kingdom in later life.”

These statements from both the Bell Review and UK Government are fundamental to the approach taken in this thesis in that change and innovation in the UK higher

education sector are acknowledged at the highest levels of Government and University leadership. When discussing the UK Government's commitment to continue to succeed, in what has been termed the knowledge economy, the Minister of State for universities and science stated that,

“We cannot stand still, nor take for granted our universities' enviable global reputation and position at the top of league tables. We must ensure that the system is also fulfilling its potential and delivering good value for students, for employers and for the taxpayers who underwrite it. We need action to address the lack of clear information available to university applicants and the variation in quality and outcomes experienced by some students” (BIS, 2016, p. 5).

1.2 Chapter outline

This chapter continues with a personal perspective on my commitment to the research. This is followed by an overview on the strategic importance of international students to UK universities. The chapter then describes the context for the primary research and leads to an explanation of why undertaking this thesis in the context of Nepal is important. Unemployment in Nepal has risen from less than 2% in the late 1990's to 3.4% in 2017 (Trading Economics, 2017). However, it is reported that, “Youth unemployment [in Nepal] among university graduates is 26.1%” and three times higher than among those without university education (International Labour Organisation, 2014, p. 1). Consequently, these statistics confirm the importance of fully investigating whether any modifications to Business Studies courses would enhance the employment opportunities of Nepalese graduates choosing to return to Nepal. The chapter concludes with the research questions, an introduction to the research design, including interviewee populations and the organisation of the thesis.

1.3 Personal perspective

In writing this thesis, I have used the first person in sections where transparency and reflection in my thought processes are considered helpful in contributing to the credibility of the study. The commitment to this thesis came from a belief that the creation of an inclusive learning and teaching culture would, “enable all students to develop academically, professionally and personally to fulfil their potential” (Wray, 2013, p. 3). Brooks and Waters also noted, “that students’ own perspectives on their motivations, objectives and experiences are sorely lacking” (2013, p. 2). As a lecturer with over twenty years’ experience in teaching Business Studies courses to international students from many cultures, including South Asian students, I have developed an ongoing interest in understanding in more depth the possible effect of cultural diversity on educational decision-making. I was also interested in understanding whether, and how, the ten-year civil war in Nepal (1996-2006) [discussed in chapter two] (Neelakantan, 2016) affected educational decision-making, especially considering Shields and Rappleyes’s (2008) statement, “education and public schools in particular figured largely in the events leading up to the war and during the conflict itself” (p. 92).

A key requirement of my professional work in higher education has been to consider both emerging and established countries for teaching international students. From the research findings of this thesis, an objective is to contribute to literature and make recommendations that will enable professional practitioners to respond more specifically to the requirements of Nepalese students on UK Business Studies courses. These recommendations should translate into teaching skills that are recognised and valued by students and form the basis of choosing to study business at a UK university

or by employers to encourage them to recruit more UK educated Nepalese business graduates.

1.4 The strategic importance of international students to UK Universities

It has been recognised (Universities UK, 2014) that international students are a valuable source of income to UK universities and to local economies via expenditure on and off campus. In view of this recognition, sustaining and developing the competitive position of UK universities can be seen as important to individual UK universities and the UK as a whole. However, a report from Universities UK (2014) found that following several reforms made to the immigration system in the UK, the higher education sector experienced two consecutive declines in overseas entrants in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 academic years. Universities UK (2014) warned of some uncertainty as to whether the UK can return to a period of significant growth in international numbers, citing immigration policy and absence of a formal UK Government commitment to grow student numbers. In terms of enrolments from non-EU countries, there was a further small decrease between 2014/15 and 2015/16 (of 1.2%) in the number of international (non-EU) student enrolments in the UK (HESA, 2017).

The Nepalese students interviewed for this thesis studied full-time in the UK but had not been sent directly by an overseas institution. The responsibility of the receiving UK university towards Nepalese students coming to the UK can be seen as the same as those of a UK institution sending students to an overseas university in that, “we should also pay close attention to the needs of those we are sending overseas before they go and after they return. Students will be better equipped to capitalise on the valuable awareness, knowledge and skills that they acquired as a result of studying overseas” (Ashwill, 2005,

p. 10). The implications of these comments to Nepalese schools and education consultancies, as well as UK universities, are discussed in Chapter six.

1.5 Influences on educational decision-making and expectations for employment

The literature review in Chapter three provides examples of published research which add to the reasons why a conceptual approach developed from the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) has been adopted for analysing the data from this research. A new conceptual approach was seen as beneficial in the work of Rounsaville (2011) in researching an alternative explanation as to why international students chose to study overseas. Rounsaville (op. cit.) added to knowledge using a conceptual framework based on the capital theories of Bourdieu (1986) and confirmed that it was still possible to add to previous studies on the influences of educational decision-making of international students. I am using, and believe this to be for the first time, a conceptual framework developed from the work of Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) for analysing educational decision-making.

This thesis has been designed to add new knowledge for academics and lecturers to refine and augment current professional teaching practice in business studies. In planning this thesis, I developed my thinking around a conceptual model developed from the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012).

Its purpose is to show how the interlocking five systems of the Bronfenbrenner model, discussed in detail later in this thesis, mesh together within an environment conditioned

by the cultural work of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner. Using this conceptual framework, I will be able to see from Bronfenbrenner's work on human development, whether and how ecological and environmental influences have affected the educational decision-making processes of Nepalese graduates. Bronfenbrenner (1979) referred to influences on decision-making as, "a set of nested structures, each inside the next like a set of Russian dolls" (1979, p. 3), interlinking and impacting on an individual's development.

In their work on cultural diversity Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) studied the response behaviours of individuals of a society towards solving problems between people. It has been seen in the development of graduate aptitudes that, "cultural competence is arguably the most important skill for effective work performance in the 21st century" (Alpert, 2015, p. 1). Using Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's Intercultural Awareness Profiling (IAP) questionnaires (IAP, 2018), I will be able to understand further the cultural competence skills of graduates.

In view of the work on culture by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), and later seen in research from Alpert (2015), I decided to undertake my primary research in Nepal. Hagen (1988) described Nepal as one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. I was particularly interested in looking more closely into the influence of culture and caste on educational decision-making and whether, as a result of belonging to a particular caste, students were likely to be pushed into or pre-disposed towards a particular academic track or pulled or drawn through independent action. Nepal is home to a wide variety of ethnic groups, all speaking their own language and possessing their own cultural traditions. Nepal also exhibits an unusual geography, from the southern plains of the Terai to the

world's highest peaks in the north. A map of Nepal is shown in Appendix 1 and Figures 3 and 4 on pages 29 and 30 illustrate the geographical location and regions of Nepal.

Throughout this thesis employers and graduates refer to the scarcity of jobs for Nepalese graduates returning home after completing their studies at a UK university. On this issue, Crammer (2006) refers to the changing conceptions of higher education in the UK towards employability by employers, graduates, academics and, increasingly, parents. Crammer (2006, p. 169) argued that:

“Resources would be better utilised to increase employment-based training and experience, and/or employer involvement in courses, which were found to positively affect immediate graduate prospects in the labour market and, therefore, support graduates in the transitional stage into employment.”

The importance of involving employers in courses led to the decision that, when developing the research proposal, the views of Nepalese employers and education consultancies should be included. For professional practitioners teaching business studies in universities it might then be possible to make more informed recommendations for changes to a Business Studies course that should lead to greater employment opportunities for future UK educated Nepalese business studies graduates who return home.

1.6 The importance of undertaking this research in Nepal

On 18th February 1951, King Tribhuvan of Nepal committed himself to the establishment of democracy (Brown, 2002). However, “in a poor, undeveloped nation which lacked any of the democratic traditions or political organisations, [this] democratic political system was stillborn during the Revolution of 1950-51” (Brown, 2002, p. 22). The portrayal of Hindus in prominent positions in textbooks in Nepal had,

“effectively marginalised many of the country’s ethnic and religious minorities” (Shields 2013, p. 57).

Given my interest in understanding further the influence of culture in educational decision-making, I decided to look further into cultural diversity through the writings of Toni Hagen. (1917 -2013). Hagen (1988) tells of his experiences from 1950 when he worked in Nepal as a development expert and from 1952 when he was contracted to both the United Nations (UN) and the Nepalese Government. His writings were concerned with both the geographical and cultural makeup of the country and were first undertaken at a time when ‘outsiders’ were forbidden entry to Nepal. The work of Hagen inspired my aim of explicating of the specific influences of cultural contexts on educational decision-making.

The research for this thesis also explores how external factors such as the UK Government’s withdrawal of the two-year post-study work visa has impacted on the educational decision-making of Nepalese and other international students. It has been suggested that changes in immigration policy and the withdrawal of this visa are “a nail in the coffin of UK higher education” (Milligan et al., 2011, p. 839).

1.7 Research questions

The following five research questions which form the backbone of the thesis, were formulated by taking into account my personal perspectives on this topic and underpin the rationale for undertaking my research in Nepal. The questions are designed to seek understanding of whether influences on the educational decision -making of Nepalese UK educated graduates and their expectations for employment are being fully realised.

1. What initially influenced the decisions of Nepalese graduates to study in the UK?
2. What preconceptions and post-graduation reflections on UK business studies did Nepalese graduates have?
3. How does the UK educational experience impact on graduates' relationship with and values towards work, including job satisfaction, when returning to Nepal?
4. What specific attributes do Nepalese employers look for in UK educated Nepalese business studies graduates?
5. How has the design and delivery of a Business Studies course prepared Nepalese business graduates for employment on returning home?

The use of a new conceptual approach developed from the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) provides opportunities to integrate theoretical and professional-practitioner perspectives into theories of educational decision-making. Although there are limitations in the research, for example with respect to the absolute number of Nepalese graduates and employers interviewed, it is designed to offer a new way of supporting teachers in Business Studies courses. The theories examined through different “theoretical lenses” (Creswell, 2007, p. 3) will enable me, “to look at complicated problems and social issues, focusing (my) attention on different aspects of the data and providing a framework within which to conduct analysis” (Reeves et al., 2008, p. 1).

1.8 Research design and interviewee populations

The literature reviewed also assisted in finalising the research questions confirming that, “the outcomes in qualitative research hinge greatly on the contexts from which we obtain data” (Roller and Lavrakas, 2013, p. 1). Following ethical approval from Anglia Ruskin University, I carried out one pilot interview in London with a graduate who had degrees from both a pre- and post-1992 university; this helped to determine the efficacy

of my questions. I then undertook a series of ‘context’ interviews in Nepal with executives and professionals recommended by the British Council in Kathmandu. The purpose of these interviews was to enable me to understand further the context and environment in which I would be undertaking the main inquiry. Face-to-face interviews in Nepal were conducted with twenty-three UK educated Nepalese business studies graduates of both bachelors and masters degrees from pre- and post-1992 UK universities. Additional perspectives have come from employers of the graduates I interviewed and the educational consultancies who advised those graduates, parents and sponsors on choice of country, university and course.

1.9 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis has been designed to enable lecturers teaching on business courses to make changes to their course and course content that could assist future Nepalese students in preparing for employment and influence Nepalese employers to employ more business studies graduates from UK universities. My recommendations may be transferable to other international students, particularly those coming to UK universities from non-EU countries.

Chapter two explores the context for this thesis, including international student numbers, competition for international (non-EU) students and the challenges associated with higher education in Nepal. It then considers the influence on educational decision-making of Nepalese history, geography, migration and political instability. The significance to educational decision-making of the ten-year civil war (1996-2006) in Nepal is considered and the chapter concludes with a review of educational developments in Nepal including the structure of education provision. Understanding

the context in which this thesis takes place helps to explain the complexity of the variables which impact on educational development and educational decision-making in Nepal.

Chapter three opens with the challenges facing UK higher education including UK Government policy on migration, Brexit and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). There is a review of the literature on internationalisation in UK higher education, student mobility and destination-making theories of educational decisions of international students. Further to considering the influence of the Nepalese civil war on educational decision-making in Chapter two, there is discussion around conflict in the emerging field of comparative education. The chapter concludes with a review of literature on graduate attributes and graduate employability including issues around work experience in Business Studies courses.

Chapter four details the research design as well as planning and execution and explains the methodology in terms of how the sampling, interviews, transcripts and coding were undertaken. This chapter also explains how the conceptual framework, based on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), was used in the analysis and understanding of the data. Potential ethical issues from undertaking research in Nepal are also considered and the chapter concludes with a discussion around the validity, reliability and limitations of the research.

Chapter five presents findings from the data collected and explains how the main themes and associate-themes emerged from the data. The analysis considers these findings against the conceptual framework introduced in Chapter four. This chapter illustrates

how using the conceptual framework traces the influence of culture through all stages of the educational decision-making process.

Chapter six opens with a discussion of the key findings exploring the influences on, and participants' experiences against, expectations of UK education. There is consideration of the design and delivery of a Business Studies course with the objective of assessing whether changes can be made to further realise a graduate's expectations in terms of quality and future employment prospects.

In the concluding Chapter seven, the results of the research for this thesis are assessed against the research questions. The chapter identifies the contributions to knowledge, makes recommendations for developments in Business Studies courses and includes implications for professional practice opportunities for future research.

Chapter Two: Context

2.1 Introduction

Following the introduction to this thesis in Chapter one, this chapter assesses the degree to which the national context of Nepal may have influenced Nepalese Business Studies graduates in their decision to study in higher education in the UK. It also considers how the graduates' ethnic and local contexts may have influenced their experience of graduates in employment following a return to Nepal.

The chapter is organised in three sections. Section one provides global and UK statistics on international student numbers and competition for international students, including the latest data available (2015/16) on the number of Nepalese students enrolled on Business Studies courses in the UK. The discussion around whether international student numbers should be included or excluded from UK immigration numbers is introduced. Issues around economic incentives to study abroad and students' financing of international are also discussed.

Section two analyses references to Nepal from the work of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) on the many challenges associated with higher education in Nepal including equity over access, political influences and views on the quality of state and private education.

Section three outlines educational developments in Nepal since 1951 and considers the historical background together with geographical, cultural and economic conditions that may be influencing the educational decisions of Nepalese students towards studying overseas. The section includes an assessment of the stages in development of Nepal,

including the significance to educational development of Rostow's (1960) 'take off stage'. It shows how developments in the infrastructure of Nepalese education have led to improvements in literacy, school attendance and the increasing number of students progressing into Nepalese higher education. The structure of education provision in Nepal, including issues around university education, precedes the conclusion to this chapter.

2.2 Section One

2.2.1 Global and UK statistics on international student numbers

Figures for 2015/16 from the UK Council for International Student Affairs show that there were 438,010 international students in the UK, comprising 29% non-UK EU and 71% non-EU (UKCISA, 2017a). In the UK for 2015/16, 37.6% of all international students were studying business compared to 51.7% of Nepalese students (HESA: Data Request, 2017). Table 1 provides information on numbers of students studying in the UK from Nepal and from the top 10 non-EU sending countries in the two-year period 2014/15 to 2015/16.

Table 1: Top 10 Non-EU sending countries to UK universities and number of Nepalese students studying in UK universities (2014/15-2015/16)

Top 10 non-EU sending countries	2014-15	2015-16	%+-
China (PRC)	58,845	62,105	+6
United States	10,205	10,545	+3
India	10,125	9,095	-20
Nigeria	9,475	7,615	-20
Malaysia	8,540	7,495	-12
Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region)	6,925	6,760	-2
Saudi Arabia	4,250	4,145	-3
Thailand	4,010	3,890	-3
Singapore	3,040	2,990	-2
Canada	2,970	2,970	0
All other	55,925	54,575	-2
Total (all Non-Eu)	174,310	172,185	-1.2
Nepalese students enrolled in UK Universities*	1,625	870	-46

Source: HESA Data Requests (2012 – 2017)

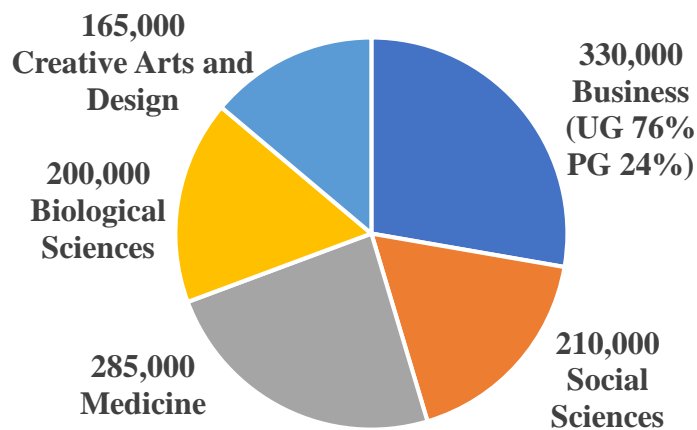
***Figures for Nepal are included in ‘All other’**

The HESA data in Table 1 confirm a 20% decline in the number of students from India and Nigeria but a 46% decline in numbers from Nepal. Table 1 also highlights the major recruitment markets for UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and underlines that student recruitment from China, the US and India contribute significantly to the total number of international students coming to UK Universities. Although the number of students from China and the US rose, the 20% decline from India and Nigeria was the highest decrease in student numbers from the top 10 ‘sending’ countries between 2014/15 and 2015/16. It has been suggested that, “the recruitment of large numbers of international students is critical to the survival of many academic programmes and even some institutions” (Brooks and Waters, 2011, p. 160).

Using HESA subject categories, the data in Figure 1 confirm that Business and Administrative Studies continue to attract the highest number of international and home undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Figure 1: UK higher education enrolment by subject (2015/16)

Top 5 Subject Areas



Source: Adapted from HESA (2017)

Further details of student enrolment by subject and level of study can be found in Appendix 2

Using 'Business' as the 'descriptor' for statistics supplied for my thesis by HESA, 1,688 Nepalese students came to the UK in 2013/14 (HESA, Data Request, 2017). Business being the most popular subject choice for 61.3% of those students. However, Table 2 also shows that the number of Nepalese students studying Business in UK universities decreased from 670 in 2014/15 to 450 in 2015/16 (HESA Data Requests, September 2014, 2017).

Table 2: Number and percentages of Nepalese domiciled students. Business and all other subjects full-time (2008/9 to 2015/16)

Year	Total studying full-time in the UK	Nepalese studying Business	%	Nepalese studying all others	%
2015/16	870	450	51.7	420	48.3
2014/15	1226	670	54.6	556	45.4
2013/14	1688	1075	61.3	613	38.7
2012/13	1714	680	39.6	1035	60.4
2011/12	1625	735	45.2	890	54.8

Source: HESA Data Requests (September 2014, 2017)

Table 2 further indicates that the total number of Nepalese students enrolled in UK universities fell from 1,226 in 2014/15 to 870 in 2015/16, a decline of 29%. In contrast, the number of Nepalese students enrolled in US universities increased from 8,158 in 2014/15 to 9,662 in 2015/16, an increase of 18.4% (Institute of International Education (IIE), 2016). The percentage increase in Nepalese students enrolling in US universities was second only to the 24.9% increase in students from India enrolled in US universities in 2015/16. This may have been due to US visa policy as reported by Study in the USA (2016, p. 1):

“Getting your visa to study in the United States takes time but can be a surprisingly easy procedure. In many countries, the number of student visas issued by the United States has grown significantly in the last year.”

Overall, the global population of students who move to another country to study continues to rise from, “3.5 million mobile students in 2009 up from 800,000 in the mid-1970s reaching almost 5 million in 2014” (Benson, 2015, p. 5). The British Council

noted the outbound mobility ratio (mobile tertiary students divided by total tertiary enrolments), “has remained remarkably stable from the early 1990s onwards at just over two percent per annum” (British Council, 2012, p. 4). By 2020, “the forecast number of students travelling to the UK would be around 331,000, to the US 582,00 and Australia 277,000” (British Council, 2012, p. 7).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) projected that, with demographic changes, international student mobility is likely to reach eight million per year by 2024/25 (OECD, 2013). However, “while the number of mobile students increases, so does the competition, and the UK must work hard to keep hold of its strong position in this market” (Universities UK, 2014, p. 7). This forecast of an increase in the number of students studying overseas should represent a growth opportunity for UK universities seeking to recruit more international students (Jones, 2013). The movement of students across the world in pursuit of a higher education is, “strongly affected by education policies and by policies in other areas including employment and immigration” (Brooks and Waters, 2011, p. 44).

2.2.2 Competition for international students

According to research by Choudaha et al. (2013) English speaking countries may find it increasingly difficult to maintain their share of international students as:

“Competition for international students is becoming more intense and complex, as reflected by the diminishing global market share of the four key players—the US, the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, and Canada. Although overall growth of globally mobile students is expected to continue, its composition in terms of where they come from, where they are going, and their level of study is changing.” (p. 6).

The EIU (2013) has forecast that numbers of international students seeking tertiary education overseas would increase with developments in secondary education. In Nepal, the number of students in higher education increased by 56%, from 113,020 in 2006, representing a pass rate of 38% in the secondary school leaving certificate (SLC), to 259,916 in 2010 (a pass rate of 62% in the SLC) (Clark, 2013). In 2014/15, 480,891 university students were enrolled in Nepalese universities; of those 405,341 students were enrolled at Tribhuvan University (TU), representing “85% of tertiary student enrolments in Nepal. Tribhuvan University consists of 85 constituent campuses in five regions throughout the country and 826 affiliated private college campuses in the same five regions” (Banskota, 2014 p. 6). However, TU enrolments are expected to decrease by around 20,000 students with the establishment of new universities.

Educational developments in traditionally ‘sending’ countries such as China and India have been made in, “an explicit attempt to increase their attractiveness to the international student market” (Brooks and Waters, 2013, p. 2). Brooks and Waters (op. cit.) also draw attention to countries including Malaysia entering into partnerships with UK, US and Australian universities using English speaking education to recruit students from China, India and the UAE. To ensure UK universities maintain their attractiveness to international students, these competitive moves led to the recommendation that, “UK education providers should continuously maintain and enhance the quality of the (international) students’ experience” (QAA, 2015, p. 6). The literature reviewed in Chapter three highlights some of the reasons students give for studying overseas.

2.2.3 UK Government policy towards international students

In August 2017, the UK Government's Home Secretary commissioned the MAC to assess the impact of international students in the UK (Gov.uk, 2017e, p. 1):

“The (UK) Government strongly wishes to continue to attract international students to study in the UK. We recognise that they enhance our educational institutions both financially and culturally; they enrich the experience of domestic students; and they become important ambassadors for the United Kingdom in later life.”

Concerns were raised by the Indian Commerce Minister (Mishra and Sharma, 2012) when referring to the cancellation of the two-year post-study work visa in 2012 (UK Visa Bureau, 2017). In a parliamentary answer to MPs, addressing these concerns, the UK Minister of State for the Home Office stated, “The Government has no plans to reintroduce the previous post-study work route, which saw large numbers of fraudulent applications from graduates who remained unemployed or in low-skilled work” (Parliament, UK, 2015). In both the letter and annex to the MAC on international students (Gov.uk, 2017e), there was no specific reference to any automatic right to work experience after graduation. The UK Government policy towards post-study work experience differs from Australia and the US who are continuing with post-study schemes (Australian Government Post-Study work arrangements, 2017: US Graduate Internships, 2017).

Bhattarai (2009) noted that many Nepalese parents relied on students being able to work part-time to pay for their maintenance and that Nepalese students came to the UK because of opportunities for learning and employment. Bhattarai (op. cit.) added that some students had not been able to find jobs so used all of the money they brought with them; many regretted their decision to come to study in the UK. Given the importance

that Nepalese graduates placed on paying back loans to family and/or banks, the cancellation of the UK's two-year post-study work visa removed a valuable incentive to study in the UK.

This has reduced not only their opportunity to work in the UK but their productivity to the UK is also lost as a result. One way in which Nepalese students in Australia countered difficulties in paying for their education was highlighted in a study by Kshitiz and Shreeram (2011, p. 51):

“This (survey) shows that the students who choose Bachelor degree have to give much time to study and usually don't want to repeat the course as it will be expensive for them. So, they choose diploma or advanced diploma courses that are easy and cheap. Most of the students later change the study course. More than 62 % have changed courses of study after coming to Australia.”

2.3 Section Two

2.3.1 Challenges associated with higher education in South Asia

The EIU (2013) reported that the growth of industry and services has had implications for the role of higher education in generating a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. The EIU report (op. cit.) advised that the issue is becoming critical for many countries seeking investment, concluding that rising incomes and a growing middle class across South Asia is driving the demand for higher education, a demand that is currently not being met by existing capacity. The report raised issues around equity of access to all levels of education and possibilities for increasing, or adding to, private provision. The EIU report (op. cit.) commented on the appropriateness of courses studied by graduates for employment in their home country and opportunities for newly qualified PhDs returning home from overseas study. The report also addressed the need for

depoliticising the higher education sector, improving quality assurance and poor employability of graduates.

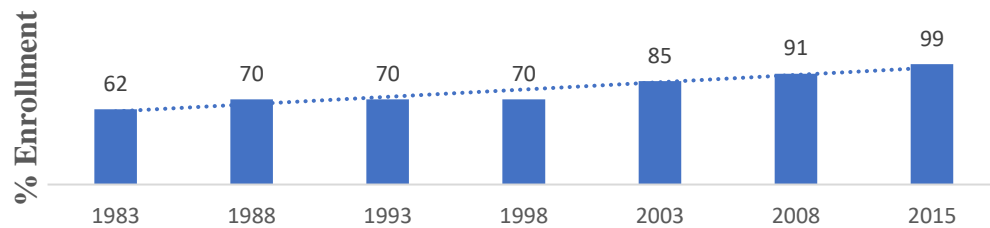
2.3.2 Identifying rising, unmet demand for higher education

The South Asia region has been described as, “one of the most youthful, presenting a distinct window of opportunity for the higher education sector” (EIU, 2013, p. 2.). The role the higher education sector plays in facilitating a skilled, knowledgeable workforce has become critical, “to the point of competitive advantage for many countries seeking investment” (EIU, 2013, p. 12). The double-digit growth forecast by the EIU for Nepal presents not only an opportunity to develop a young competitive labour force but also, “an enormous challenge for the higher education sector in addressing issues of skills development and employability” (EIU, 2013, p. 11).

2.3.3 Issues over equity of access

If countries are to realise Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) programme for Nepal which is to achieve universal primary school enrolment, “then every child must have access to education (article 28)” (Unicef, 2011, p. 1). In the MDG Progress Report for Nepal (MDG Nepal, 2013) considerable improvement has been made towards equity of access to state funded primary education. The MDG Nepal (op. cit.) report stated that by 2013, 95.3% of children were enrolled in primary education. The Government of Nepal’s National Planning Commission and the United Nations Country Team in Nepal also agreed that by 2015, primary education would be available to 100% of school-age children. The increasing percentage of Nepalese children in primary schooling is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2:
Nepal: Net Primary School Enrolment (1983 -2015)



Source: Adapted from World Bank (2015)

Positive changes in educational development of Nepal observed by Savada (1991) include the fact that schools and colleges were open to all; and enrolment figures have risen rapidly, as seen in Figure 2; over the past 50 years primary school enrolment has risen from 9,000 to 3.6 million. With improvement in achieving universal primary education it has been argued that, “any successor targets which focus on tertiary education and youth must have the skills to manage governments, business and civil society bodies” (Glencorse, 2013, p. 1). World Education News and Reviews (WENR, 2013, p.1) reported further success in that:

“the Ministry of Education figures for pass rates in the exam taken at the end of grade 10, also show steadily increasing numbers of students qualifying for higher secondary studies, which in turn suggests an increasing pipeline of university-ready students.”

2.3.4 Political influences

The 2016 World Bank Development Update on Nepal (World Bank, Nepal, 2016) reported that in the span of six-months, Nepal was hit by two major shocks. The first was the April/May 2015 earthquakes that caused a huge loss of life and assets. The second came in the form of a near complete disruption of external and “cross border trade resulting in acute shortages of fuel and essential supplies across the country

subsequent to adoption of the new Constitution on September 20, 2015” following “eight years of deliberations” by Nepal’s political parties (World Bank, Nepal, 2016, p. i).

Failures to finalise the Nepalese constitution, evidenced by frequent changes in government, including the People’s War and protests around the new constitution, led to ongoing political instability. It was noted that, “schools in the Terai region of Nepal were particularly hard hit as they had already been forcibly closed due to strikes, long before the transit/transport disruptions started” (World Bank, Nepal, op. cit. p. 10).

Higher education also suffered as:

“At Tribhuvan University there are often power cuts of up to twelve hours a day. There is no drinking water, clean bathrooms, or Internet access on the main campus. There are not nearly enough classrooms to accommodate the huge number of students, libraries are sparse and completely outdated, and buildings are regularly burned down by disaffected groups.” (Glencorse, 2013, p. 1).

A more liberal approach of incoming Nepalese Governments led to the development of private secondary schools but with the Maoists becoming the dominant political force, these private schools came under constant attack. The role of education in peacebuilding has been studied by Unicef who noted that although schools were not a primary target and generally continued to operate, they were subjected to, “violent interventions when they suspected that Maoist activity was taking place in a school” (Unicef, 2011, p. 6).

Political instability in Nepal has contributed to parents choosing private secondary school education for their children. In 1951 Nepal introduced a parliamentary form of democratic system with the removal of the 104-year-old Rana oligarchy. Acharya (2004) observed that democracy ‘contradicted’ with the culturally shaped and nurtured hierarchical and gender based social arrangements and has suffered from political

instability. There have been frequent changes in government and conflict between the pro-culturist and pro-transformative forces. Neupane, offered his view that, “The Nepalese Government needs to create an educational system that is free of political meddling and nepotism” (Neupane, 2014, p. 169).

Karen and Olwig (2013) noted that political instability was a major factor contributing to migration, including educational migration. This has increased the attractiveness of study abroad programmes and the provision of curricula, including teaching of English, in Nepalese private secondary schools, facilitating entry to overseas universities. Choudaha et al. (2013) commented that admissions are normally to countries where English is the first language, noting that regional and new educational providers teaching in English present a threat to mainly English-speaking destination countries.

Shields (2013) in his work on internationalisation and globalisation explained that the main challenge facing Nepal was promoting national unity and resolving the major cause of political unrest. Integrated Risk Management (IJET (2015, p. 1) reported that:

“Violent protests are ongoing after the new constitution in Nepal was approved (in 2015). Clashes between police and protesters are common during demonstrations and opponents have also staged shutdown strikes, causing severe disruptions in affected districts. Police regularly order curfews in neighbourhoods or entire towns after violent unrest. These orders often have little effect.”

Closer assessment of the role of contextual circumstance, including state conflict, is evidenced when identifying links between context, education and conflict and supports the work of Paulson and Rapple (2007, p. 252):

“We agree wholeheartedly with the sentiments of most comparatists who insist that local context cannot be ignored. Indeed, the central tension that lies at the heart of comparative and international education is the belief in the ideal of being able to ‘learn from elsewhere’ constrained by the realisation that contextual differences make importing ‘best practices’ observed elsewhere extremely problematic.”

Rose and Greeley (2006) suggested that education was critical to the reconstruction process and could provide a meaningful peace dividend, thus consolidating peace and stability. Paulson and Rappleye, (op. cit.) also cited the work of Bush and Saltarelli (2000) outlining the negative and positive faces of education in situations of tension or violence. These faces include the denial of education as a weapon of war (negative) and the cultivation of inclusive citizenship (positive). Altbach and Kelly argue that, “involvement in international programmes would improve aspects of education and contribute towards world peace” (1986, p. 4) and further:

“...recognise that quality education, the elimination of illiteracy and access to free primary education for all can contribute to more inclusive societies, equity, stable and harmonious relations and friendship among nations, peoples, groups and individuals, and a culture of peace, fostering mutual understanding, solidarity, social justice and respect for all human rights for all.”

All the above references inform and endorse the close ties between the roles of education and conflict, form a central topic of this thesis.

2.3.5 Quality of Nepalese education

“The quality of education is an increasingly important concern in contemporary Nepalese society, possibly due to the anticipated higher returns to education in the global labour market” (Acharya and Leon-Gonzalez, 2016, p. 15). Acharya and Leon-Gonzalez (op. cit.) found that possibilities for international migration have encouraged rural households in areas of Nepal that lack quality education to migrate to urban areas for better-quality English medium private education. Their results showed that 61% of households stated quality was the primary reason for sending children to private secondary schools. Supporting reasons, all of which pertained to perceived quality, were that teachers make more effort in teaching, classes are regular in school, teaching is in

English and children apply themselves more in private schools. It was shown that, “Almost all private schools have introduced additional courses in English and maths, that were not generally found in state schools” (Subedi, 2013, p. 59).

The migration process was often made possible with finance from international remittances to cover the costs of settlement in the urban area and the costs of the children’s education. With a population of 2.5 million people, the Kathmandu Valley is growing at four percent per year, and is “the first region in Nepal to face the unprecedented challenges of rapid urbanisation and modernization at a metropolitan scale” (World Bank, 2013a, p. 1)

2.4 Section Three

2.4.1 Historical background to educational development

Caddell (2007) recorded that until their overthrow in 1951, the Rana dynasty had ruled Nepal from 1846, replacing successors to the rule of Pratik Narayan Shah (1743-75) who had defeated the three Mall kingdoms of Nepal (Kathmandu, Paton and Bhadgaon) by 1769. The Ranas kept education the exclusive prerogative of the ruling elite; the rest of the population remained largely illiterate. The Ranas were opposed to any form of state schooling for the people, although they emphasised formal instruction for their own children to prepare them for a place in government. The decision of Jang Bahadur Rana to give his children an English education was viewed by Savada, (1991) as being above Sanskrit-based education, the philosophical, religious language associated with social class and educational attainment.

Hence, in the years before 1951 very few Nepalese children received any state funded education, even though education was formally established in Nepal after the opening of first school in 1853 (Thapa, 2011). Parajuli maintained that any formal schools were for the elite and, “the general public and community people had no access to education at that time” (Parajuli and Das, 2013, p. 148). Wood (1959) claimed that education was discouraged, even prohibited, except for sons of government officials. Parajuli and Das (op. cit.) recorded that state schools were formally opened for the public only after the establishment of democracy in Nepal in 1951.

2.4.2 Geographical influences

Nepal is a landlocked and mountainous country located between China and India. Nearly 75% of the land is covered with high mountains, mid hills and rugged hills as seen in Figure 3. The geographical positioning of Nepal was described by Nepal’s founding father King Prithvi Narayan Shah in the latter half of the eighteenth century as, “a yam caught between two boulders” (Timilsina, 2017). The geographical location of Nepal seen in Figure 3 made it important to securing safer borders for the British Empire in India. Nepal’s Gurkha soldiers have been a long standing and welcome addition to the British army and yet, there have been no colonial links with any foreign power.

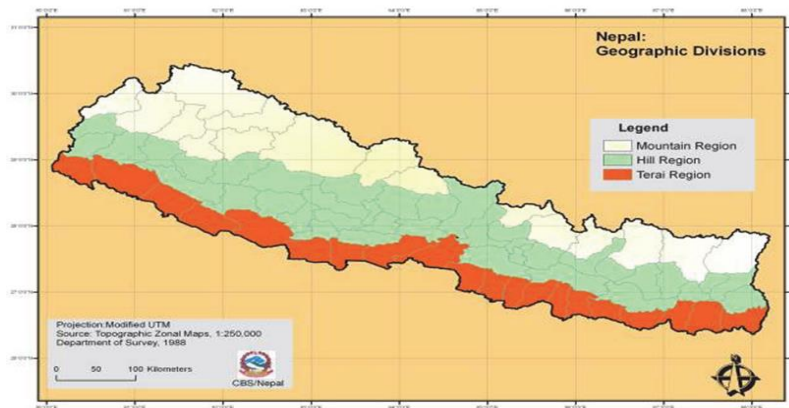
Figure 3: Geographical location of Nepal



Source: deshgujarat.com

Figure 4 shows the lowland plains of the Terai region in the south bordering India, the hill region where the capital Kathmandu is located and the high mountains of the Himalayas in the north and east bordering Tibet, an autonomous region of China.

Figure 4: Geographical divisions of Nepal (Terai, Hill and Mountains)



Source: Topographic Zonal Maps. ILO: Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal

Mathema (2007) argued that the barrier that excluded poor children from educational opportunities in Nepal, was the distance from school. Mathemas (2007) has also shown there is sufficient documented evidence to suggest that failure and/or low-performance is a phenomenon which frequently occurs in districts or geographical areas with a low

Human Development Index (HDI). Mikesell (2006) argued that the rural schools in Nepal were used to disqualify rural young people from roles in society and turn them into failures and Mathema also evidenced the negative attitude of teachers toward poor children's ability to succeed. It was observed (Countrystudies, 2014) that two distinct biases, social class and geography remained pronounced in educational attainment. Notwithstanding the problems of attendance at state schools related often to geographical factors, access to quality secondary education which might reasonably be expected to lead to higher education, is not universally distributed. A desire for education is often centred on family, caste and cultural influences and continues to frustrate developments.

2.4.3 Cultural and caste influences

Lambert (2017) recorded that in the 14th Century, one of the Malla rulers, Jayasthiti Malla, introduced the caste system into Nepal. The caste system retains an important role in social stratification in Nepal with Parish, 1996, p.26 noting that:

“Whilst the Nepalese Government no longer enforces the system of exclusions, which so powerfully symbolise hierarchy, basic patterns persist. It is not only actions of the state that sustain caste. Given the social, economic and political changes in Nepal, the persistence of the caste system is remarkable.”

The continuing struggle between the various castes and religious groups in Nepal vying for influence was referred to by Whelpton (2005) in his writings on the history of Nepal. He noted that caste and class status paralleled each other, with the highest castes having the most land, capital and political influence.

During the rule of Nepal by the Rana family, education was suppressed, with the Rana regime, (Savada, 1991, p.1):

“fearing a public that was educated. The Ranas kept education the exclusive prerogative of the ruling elite; the rest of the population remained largely illiterate. The Ranas were opposed to any form of public schooling for the people, although they emphasised formal instruction for their own children to prepare them for a place in the Government.”

While officially banned in Nepal in 1963 (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], (2004), caste discrimination remained rampant and Maoist demands to redress the situation resonated strongly with disadvantaged ethnic groups. In the 2001 Census, around 81% of Nepalese reported their religion as Hindu, thus, “locating themselves within the caste system (Bennett et al. (2008, p.1). Appendix 14 gives details of main castes in Nepal from the 2001 Census.

Bennett et al (2008) wrote that the issue of the Nepalese Government’s failure to ensure equal access and inclusivity to rights has simmered for centuries. These inequalities included citizenship, justice and political representation, public health and education services. There were also differences in job opportunities in the civil service and army for those lower in the caste/ethnic hierarchy and discrimination against women and those from the Tarai/Madhes region. This failure to address inequalities was particularly acute after the overthrow of the Rana regime in 1951 when a more democratic policy was expected. However, after a brief period of democratic government, the king took back power and ruled as an absolute monarch during the period of “Partyless Panchayat Democracy” from 1960 to 1990.

After the return of party democracy in 1990 failed to make much difference in outcomes for excluded groups, the intensity of the discontent increased, enabling the Maoist insurgents to use these disparities successfully as a basis for recruitment and justification of the People’s War (1996 -2006).

2.4.4 The 10-Year Civil War (1996 -2006)

Hachhethu (2004), in a review of Maoist insurgency, argued that since the time of unification of Nepal in 1768, the rulers – Shahs, Ranas and Panchas had tried to develop Nepal as a homogeneous, monolithic and unitary state. The unitary state provided protection to one language (Nepali), one caste group (Hill Bahun-Chhetri) and one religion (Hindu), ignoring the reality of diversified and pluralistic character of the Nepali society.

The first ‘people’s movement’ took place in 1990, when the king-controlled Panchayat system was overthrown and multi-party democracy was established through a new constitution in which the king was supposed to be a constitutional monarch. The People’s War was launched in February of 1996 by the Communist Party of Nepal Maoist (CPN-Maoist) with Shields and Rappleye (2008, p. 93) writing that:

“The long-standing divisions based on caste – a hierarchical system of social organisation rooted in dominant interpretations of Hindu religious texts – was at the core of the social unrest that led to open conflict.”

However, as Bennett et al (2008) established, the Maoist insurgency which began in 1996 worsened considerably in 2002. This allowed the king to recapture power, beginning slowly in 2002 and culminating in February of 2005 when he assumed absolute control of the country.

The International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that the Maoists had quite successfully appealed to those seeing deep injustice within Nepal, including abuses by the security services and that (ICG, 2003, p.13):

“much of their attraction has stemmed not from the resonance of Maoist theory among poor and often illiterate villagers, but from the frequently inescapable logic

of a general population that feels at best poorly served by their government and at worst preyed on by officials.”

In November 2005, the Maoists and the seven leading parties formed an alliance against the king which culminated in the second people's movement. The alliance took place over 19 days in April 2006, when citizens in Kathmandu and all over the country went onto the streets and forced the king to cede power back to the parties.

Shields and Rappleye (2008, p.91) added that conflict between Maoist insurgents and the National Government has engulfed Nepal for most of the last decade, which they described “a situation that has been complicated by deep-seated instability at the highest levels of the Nepalese Government itself.. The part education played in the conflict was identified by Shields and Rappleye (op. cit. p.92) writing that:

“Education and public (state funded) schools in particular, figured largely in the events leading up to the war and during the conflict itself. The list of 40 demands that the Maoists presented to the Government immediately before declaring war included the right to mother tongue education, universal education, and the closure of all for-profit schools (as cited in Thapa and Sijapati, (2004).”

While officially banned in Nepal in 1963 (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2004), caste discrimination remained rampant, and Maoist demands to redress the situation resonated strongly with disadvantaged ethnic groups. Thus, the conflict was not the result of class disparities alone but rather (Whelpton, 2005) resulted from a complex intersection of class and ethnicity. Subedi (2016, p.1) argued that, “The caste system eroded at the ritual level, but emerged at the political and economic levels in India and Nepal”.

2.4.4.1 Summary

In writing about the Constitution of Nepal (2015), Subedi (2015) noted that it provided a range of political and legal instruments to combat past inequalities through positive

discrimination when recruiting people for public service jobs in the Nepalese Government and universities. The objective was to narrow the gap between dominant and excluded groups. Subedi (op.cit, p.335) concluded that, “The major reason for the formulation of an inclusive policy is to increase the presence of excluded groups in public institutions and in decision -making processes”.

2.4.5 Economic influences

China and India were stated as, “the two fastest growing economies in the world and two of the fastest rising global powers” (Von Einsiedel, 2012, p. 14). With reference to these surrounding geographical influences, it was the view of the World Bank, (2013c, p. 1) that:

“At this critical juncture of Nepal’s economic development, managing rapid urbanisation is essential to improving the competitiveness of the Nepalese economy, creating jobs and accelerating economic growth. This will help reduce poverty even further as well as contribute to sustainable and balanced development.”

The World Bank (op. cit.) recorded that only 17% of the Nepalese population lived in urban areas while the poor in Nepal tended to live mostly in rural areas and were engaged in agricultural activities. Poverty and unemployment in rural areas were mainly responsible for the large-scale shifting of the population to urban areas. Although a predominately rural country, urbanisation is growing at an annual rate of 4% in the Kathmandu valley and 5.2% in Pokhara.

Nepal has experienced a moderate economic growth of about 3% per annum despite prolonged conflict during the decade (1996-2006). During that period, poverty declined by about 1% per year and the proportion of the population below the poverty line reduced from about 42% in 1996 to about 28% in 2008. Reduction in poverty have been

primarily the result of remittances from abroad, which were estimated at 22% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Sapkota, 2013).

Shields argued that, “education plays a pivotal role in the development sector” Shields (2013, p. 20). Table 3 includes an assessment of the stages outlined by Rostow adapted to show stages in the development of the educational infrastructure in Nepal. Shields (2013) has shown, for example, that education, whilst not the only precondition for the take-off stage was one of the key factors that would allow a country to create a high growth, industrial economy. Whilst Rostow’s work remains an important reference model, development can be defined in other ways. Sen (2009) conceives of development as freedom and identifies five components, namely political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security.

Table 3: Nepal assessed against Rostow’s (1960) Five Stages of Development

Rostow Stage	Researcher’s assessment for Nepal
Traditional society	Continues for the majority in rural areas, including caste and religious influences. Everyculture (2017).
Preconditions to take off (education and strong national government)	Policies neglected secondary and higher education. But primary education developed, and literacy increased substantially. Education a pre-condition for takeoff (Shields 2013). Unstable governments following 1996 -2006 civil war. Conflicts in all schools and universities. Strikes and lock outs (UNICEF 2011); Sapkota (2011).
Take-off	Sustainability is threatened by a lack of effective planning and large and growing infrastructure deficits, but urban areas fueled by migration from rural areas can drive economic growth to the benefit of the entire country. (World Bank 2013a).
Drive to maturity	Unfulfilled expectations have led to frustrations in sectors of Nepalese society (See Findings, Chapter five).
The age of mass consumption	For a minority life can exceed expectations and give an acceptable work-life balance (See Findings, Chapter five).

Source: Adapted from Rostow (1960). The Five Stages of Growth

The assessment in Table 3 shows that whilst Nepal has made good progress in areas such as literacy and primary education in the ‘precondition stage, there are continuing problems facing the country in achieving ‘take-off’, the drive to maturity and the age of mass consumption. In the drive to maturity there are unfulfilled expectations for many but for a minority an acceptable work-life balance that can exceed expectations can be achieved.

2.4.6 Structure of education provision

Nepal has a dualistic system of education with both public and private schools. The overthrow of the Rana oligarchy in 1951 and the beginnings of democracy led to a governing alliance formed between the Nepali Congress and the Ranas, with each group having seven representatives in the Government. Caddell (2007) noted that this did not, however, lead to a corresponding reduction in the political use of schooling to justify and secure the positions of interest groups. Rather the form and content of educational provision changed to support the position adopted by the new Government.

Following pioneering work in Nepal by Wood from 1953-1959 (Carney and Rappleye, 2011), USAID supported initiatives to develop and improve the country’s education sector from as early as the 1960s (USAID, 2017). The view has been expressed that, “policy making in the Ministry of Education in Nepal is effectively dictated by the World Bank, which primarily acts in the interests of global elites” (Carney and Bista cited in Shields, 2013, p. 74). It was noted that, “the policies adopted by Nepalese Governments marginalised many linguistic and religious minorities” (Shields, 2013, p. 19). Massive destruction of socio-economic infrastructure coupled with large-scale population displacement and extensive military conscription of children and youths

during Nepal's protracted civil war not only further impeded the country's economic development and increased levels of poverty but also deprived many Nepalese of educational opportunities.

Mathema (2007, 2013) observed that there has been a strong social demand in Nepal for education at home and for overseas study, supported by funding from multilateral donors to develop the educational infrastructures required to meet an increasing demand for all levels of education. Unicef (2014) quoting from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics reported that overall attendance in primary schools had risen from 69% in 2010 to 98% in 2013. These figures were an improvement on an earlier report from Unicef (2010) which stated that average attendance ranged from 55% in the Terai region to 72-77% in urban, hill and mountain areas and was 69% for girls and 66% for boys. In explaining the figures, Unicef (2010) reported that the geographic location of households (Mountain, Hill or Terai) had an influence over coping mechanisms towards school attendance adopted at the household level. 12% of households from the Terai region have children with irregular school attendance (compared to only 5% of mountain households). 5% of Terai households took their children out of school all together.

It was found by the Children's Education Programme (NCEP, 2014):

“Despite improvements [*in educational infrastructure*], there remain a number of social, cultural and structural barriers to education – including poverty, caste separation, lack of physical access to schools during the monsoon season, and woefully under-funded facilities – that deny access to thousands and thousands of children.”

Private schools are continuing to play a major role in the provision of education in Nepal, including increasing opportunities for students to study overseas as most use

English as the language of instruction and the curriculum is designed to meet the admission requirements of overseas universities. Attendance at private secondary school, therefore, is often seen as the principal way of helping students study overseas as most students who end up going overseas for university education have attended these schools. Onenepal (2017) reported that Nepal introduced the SEE Exam in July 2017 as the year 12 final examination for Nepalese secondary (High School) students. This examination can allow entrance directly to UK universities whereas the previous SLC exam was rated as equivalent to UK GCSE level.

Private school education in Nepal has not been without criticism. It had been suggested that private school fees were high and education had become, “a lucrative business” (Graner 2003, p. 154). The Nepalese Ministry of Education (2011) published their rankings of the top private and state secondary schools in the various geographical regions of Nepal. In comparing the Nepalese Ministry results with those from educatenepal.com (2017) of the top ten private and state schools, over 90% were in the principal cities of Kathmandu and Pokhara. Whichever figures are used, the decision for a child to attend either a ‘top’ state or private school may, therefore, necessitate families moving children away from home to boarding schools or to live with relatives.

2.4.7 Universities in Nepal

University education in Nepal is offered by six institutions: Tribhuvan University, Mahendra Sanskrit University, Lumbini Buddhi University, Kathmandu University, Purbanchal University and Pokhara University. In addition, there are two academic institutions, BP Koala Institute of Health Science (BPKIHS) and National Academy of

Medical Science (NAMS) that run medical courses at undergraduate and post-graduate levels (educatenepal.com, 2017).

A report from the World Bank (2013b) relating to the expansion of private higher education in Nepal suggests that there are issues of limited access and concerns over quality and quality assurance, funding and governance. Issues over quality mainly exist as higher education has expanded primarily in the private sector restricting opportunities for poorer segments of the population.

The report from the World Bank (op. cit.) went on to suggest that, except for a few private and public institutions, the quality of education (no definition of which was given by the World Bank) was poor in Nepal. On the whole quality assurance and accreditation procedures were not in place, the exception being for a rudimentary system of quality assurance for professional education in engineering and medicine. Overall the governance of state funded higher education was still weak and decentralisation was seen as the means of improving all aspects of governance. Glencorse (2013) refers to, “the bloated roster of professors means that many are unpaid and unmotivated, and students are deeply unhappy” (p.1). The World Bank (op. cit.) also commented that barring a few premier institutions, the relevance of higher education to the needs of the job market was poor.

The Nepalese University Grants Commission recognised in their most recent report that HE has, “proved to be an essential and integral aspect of social and economic development. It enhances employment by promoting new skills and knowledge” (NUGC, 2012, p. iii). However, as in the World Bank Report (op. cit.), the NUGC (op. cit.) recognised that Nepal has encountered difficulties in maintaining equity in access

and assuring quality in higher education and there remained concerns over the quality of education.

It was also noted (CountrystudiesUS, 2014) that degrees, especially those obtained from American and West European institutions, carried greater prestige for employment and status than degrees from Nepalese universities. Higher caste families also had the necessary connections to receive Government scholarships to study abroad. However, if rural families gave high value to the education of their children, they were forced to send them to urban areas and this, “was a very expensive proposition that the vast majority of rural households could not afford” (CountrystudiesUS, 2014, p. 1).

The Embassy of Nepal (2017) reported a growing attraction of the UK as a preferred choice of destination for Nepalese students aspiring to higher education, recognising that the UK Government had been regularly providing scholarships in different areas for the development of human resource in Nepal since the 1950s. In addition, the UK has been offering Chevening Awards to Nepalese students for many years. However, “The number of Nepalese students pursuing university and college degrees in the UK was increasing until lately, when there were major changes in UK’s immigration policy and regulations relating student visas” (Embassy of Nepal, 2017, p. 1). Brooks and Waters (2011, p. 44) state that, “The movement of students across the world in pursuit of a higher education is strongly affected by education policies and by policies in other areas including employment and immigration”.

2.5 Conclusion to Chapter Two

Following the removal of the 104-year-old Rana oligarchy in 1951, the introduction of a parliamentary form of a democratic system led to significant changes to the state funded educational infrastructure, although continuing political instability has led to an increase in private schooling.

Bloomer and Hodkinson (1997) summarise educational decision-making as involving connections likely to be affected by social and cultural contexts, as well as actions and learning. A UK university business studies course may, therefore, need to address the complex issue of cultural differences and cultural inclusivity seen from the continuing influence of caste and culture in Nepalese society that may guide the learning of UK educated Nepalese business students returning home as graduates.

Within the overall context of the research undertaken for this thesis, the following key issues have been introduced and helped provide the background context. History and education are closely interwoven, especially links to English schools' system, as evidenced in the development of private schools. Prior to 1951, education was restricted to rulers and the elite since education for others was seen as a threat to the rulers. Since 1951 major developments in access to education have been made including the expansion of primary schools throughout Nepal and significant progress has been made in improving education, particularly literacy.

Throughout the history of Nepal, the caste system has been active in defining the status and social standing of people. Even today the caste system exerts influence, although lower castes may now have greater opportunities through the expansion of literacy and availability of primary and secondary education. Various pieces of legislation have been

enacted leading to improvements in primary school admissions and literacy in general, although geographical location and family finance often restrict attendance. Educational development programmes have been supported by international aid but there are continuing concerns about the quality of state education, including secondary education. Political uncertainty has been a continuing factor in the development of education and has led to the increase of private schools which focus on equipping students from families with sufficient finance with the qualifications they need to enter higher education overseas. Hence, private education has become a major business opportunity in Nepal.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three is divided into three sections. Each section provides potential opportunities for adding to or developing new knowledge for understanding in greater depth the educational decision-making processes of UK educated Nepalese business studies graduates. Although many of the policy issues in this chapter relate to UK education in general, wherever possible they focus on UK business studies education.

Section one opens by first explaining the challenges and changes in the framework of UK higher education predicated on literature cited in Chapter two. This leads to issues around internationalisation and concludes by showing how educational alternatives in the post-conflict environment in Nepal have contributed to the emerging field of comparative education.

Section two begins with a review of student mobility focussing on destination choice, theories around decision-making regarding educational choices, including an integrated model of educational decision-making, and the use of remittances for financing overseas education. This section concludes with an overview of the literature addressing the significance of culture including intercultural competence in delivering Business Studies courses.

Section three reviews literature on reflections of graduates studying in the UK. It also identifies graduate attributes and graduate employability, including the case for adding work experience into Business Studies courses and developing an international curriculum. A review of developments in educational marketing concludes Chapter three.

3.2 Section One

3.2.1 Challenge and changes in the framework of UK higher education

This thesis is being written at a time when there is considerable debate about the influence on net migration to the UK in the context of the UK's policy for Brexit, the UK's strategy for leaving the European Union. Comments from the National Union of Students (NUS) reflect concerns at how leaving the EU will affect the appeal of the UK to EU and non-EU international students (NUS, 2016, p. 1):

“The appeal of studying in the UK has reduced significantly in the past few years and this decline looks set to continue alongside the uncertain economic and social landscape that surrounds Brexit.”

My thesis endorses the need for studies of the type intended to identify means to improve both the appeal to Nepalese students and to document their experience of studying a Business Studies course in UK higher education. Additionally, the research includes views from different groups of participants on the cancellation of the UK's two-year post-study work visa (Gov.uk, 2012). Suspicions about students overstaying their visa entitlement post-graduation may have proved counter-productive to the appeal of UK education. Bell, the Deputy National Statistician for population and public policy at the Office of National Statistics (ONS) led an investigation (Gov.uk, 2017a) into whether students were leaving or staying in the UK post-graduation which confirmed that a new approach was needed to estimate the movement of students.

The view of the UK Home Secretary, confirmed to the MAC, was that the UK Government wanted to continue attracting international students to study in the UK. Universities UK (UUK) stated that they, “want to provide students with a world-class education so that they can achieve their full potential” (Universities UK, 2017b. p. 1).

In August 2017 it was reported that work by the ONS into whether students were leaving or staying post-graduation in the UK (Gov.uk, 2017a, p. 1):

"Crucially the report demonstrates two things: first, that many people do not simply immigrate for study and leave afterwards; their lives are more complex - some people arrive on a work visa and legitimately change to a study visa and vice versa and second, there is no evidence of a major issue of non-EU students overstaying their entitlement to stay."

An earlier White Paper had claimed that the intention of the UK Government would be a, "radical improvement and expansion in the information available to prospective students" (Gov.uk, 2011a, p. 6). Improving the information available would include more details of specific courses at individual institutions and graduate employment prospects. Universities should consider how they work with business across their teaching and research activities to support improvements to teaching, employer sponsorship as well as innovation and enterprise.

It has previously been stated that, "Universities always have been and remain unequivocally committed to delivering this [putting students at the heart of the system]" (Universities UK, 2011a, p. 3). The research for this thesis has acted on a recommendation in the Deloitte Report (2015) of an increasing need to listen to, "a louder student voice, become more flexible to attract the best students in a highly competitive market. Universities [are] now, more dependent financially on the student than before" (Deloitte, 2015, p .9).

It was seen in a survey into student academic experience by The Higher Education Policy Institute and Higher Education Academy (HEPI/HEA, 2014) UK students who said their course was not providing value for money increased from 18% in 2012 to 33% in 2014. This may have contributed to the change that was made as to how UK universities were

to be evaluated. In November 2015, the UK Government set out proposals to introduce a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The purpose of the TEF was to deliver better value for money for students, employers and taxpayers (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2015). In their response to the TEF, UUK stated that (2015, p. 3):

“One of the strengths of the UK higher education sector is its diversity. Students are a diverse population with different priorities, backgrounds, needs and prior attainment on entry. The TEF needs to recognise this diversity and teaching excellence should not be driven centrally as this will risk leading to homogeneity. The TEF can only be effective if it recognises the vital autonomy of institutions and their need to be responsive to students across diverse settings and through diverse modes of delivery.”

In 2016, the UK Government introduced the first TEF with results published in June 2017. Whilst the TEF drew attention to the need for institutions, “to be responsive to students across diverse settings and through diverse modes of delivery” (Universities UK, 2015, p. 3), the Deloitte report emphasised the need to, “strike the balance between research and learning - with increasing calls to place learning and the student at the forefront of universities’ approaches” (Deloitte, 2015, p. 10). The Deloitte report (op. cit.) asked questions as to whether universities should employ more teachers, train researchers in teaching skills, or recruit people with skills in both. The Deloitte report also noted that the TEF will, “place further focus on the quality of teaching in universities” (Deloitte, 2015, p. 17). However, there was no reference to how teaching diverse groups of home and international students might differ.

From the report by Deloitte (2015) on the key issues facing the UK higher education sector, three principal points were especially relevant to UK universities offering Business Studies courses to international business students. The issues Deloitte (op. cit.) raised related to: (i) global market (ii) student expectations and (iii) attracting and recruiting the best (teaching) talent. The Deloitte report (op. cit.) drew attention to the forecast for

increasing numbers of international students and the importance of institutions performing well in a global market. In a global economy our domestic students should also benefit from attending institutions that can offer a global perspective to enhance employability. Institutions should work to uphold, enhance and take this global reputation into new territory drawing students from abroad where it makes strategic sense to do so.” (Deloitte, 2015, p. 4).

3.2.2 Internationalisation of UK higher education

In this literature review the term ‘international’ refers to being, “between or among nations” (Daly 1999 p. 1). International education had been described, “as being at a crossroads. Today’s emerging programmes and practices must ensure that international higher education benefits the public and not simply be a profit centre” (Altbach and Knight (2007, p. 304). Qiang (2003, p. 249) argued for a broad definition of internationalisation which, “embraces the entire functioning of higher education and not merely a dimension or aspect of it, or the actions of some individuals who are part of it”. The conclusion he reached was that internationalisation included, “student/faculty exchanges, curriculum, recruiting/ hosting international students and planning and review systems” (Qiang, 2003, p. 249). As early as 2003, Qiang (op. cit.) recognised two developments were relevant in discussing internationalisation. The first development was that, “the recruitment of foreign students had become a significant factor for institutional and of national economic interest” (Qiang, 2003, p. 249). The second development was the introduction of new communication technologies enabling global online study and competition from private educational providers.

Avoudi and Masood (2007) studied the extent to which the strategic intent of UK universities towards internationalisation matched their international achievements; evidence of UK university internationalisation included two factors. The first factor was based on three variables comprising HESA data detailing the percentage of international students to the total student number, the percentage of overseas student income to total income and the market share of first year students. The second factor related to the strategic intent of a university through an analysis of their mission statement. The results were classified into four clusters defined as (i) international losers (ii) international speakers (iii) international winners and (iv) international actors. The results from this clustering exercise of 117 UK universities included pre- and post-1992 universities. The clustering exercise found that 74% of UK universities' mission statements included their intentions regarding internationalisation but less than half of the 74% were active internationally (Avoudi and Masood, *op. cit.*).

In a further exploratory study of internationalisation in six UK universities, selected from the post-1992 group and former colleges of higher education, Maringe (2009) concluded that there was little empirical evidence of the nature and extent of integration of internationalisation into the strategic mission of individual institutions. Maringe (*op. cit.*) pointed to, "conceptual and structural deficiencies in the organisation of institutional internationalisation; over emphasis on human exchange initiatives over cultural integration efforts and increasing undercurrents of feelings among staff and students of local neglect at the expense of global attention" (Maringe, *op. cit.*, p. 553). The conclusion reached was that in pre-1992 universities, globalisation was seen as a major driver of internationalisation. However, in post-1992 universities key benefits from internationalisation were, "increasing institutional competitiveness, attracting

more international students and attracting more international staff” (Maringe, op. cit., p. 559).

Debate surrounds use of the terms ‘globalisation’ and ‘internationalisation’. Globalisation was defined by Hermans and Dimaggio (2007) as a trend that promotes boundary crossing and leads to international and intercultural connectedness and exchange.

Research by Bennett and Kane (2011) into the internationalisation in university business education assessed the extent, intensity, and nature of internationalisation programmes by exploring underlying motives. Bennett and Kane (op. cit.) developed and tested a ‘suggested model’, with the intention of explaining the speed, extent and intensity of internationalisation. Their results show that the degree and/or speed of internationalisation appear to depend, “significantly on the financial situation of the host university and managerial inclinations favouring internationalisation” (Bennett and Kane, 2011, p. 366).

With this in mind, Sweeney (2012) outlined 27 proposals that UK universities should consider when adopting a strategic approach to internationalisation. Although his work was focused on European higher education, his first recommendation was that UK universities should, “prioritise a strategic transformation of internationalisation away from economic and financial imperatives towards educational values and objectives” (Higher Education Academy, 2012, p. 38). The views of the HEA came against a background emphasising the strategic importance financially of attracting international students. UUK (2014) have also argued that international students are a valuable source of income to universities and to local economies via expenditure on and off campus and

contributed more than £7 billion to the UK economy. Knight had previously defined internationalisation of higher education as, “the process of integrating international/intercultural dimensions into teaching, research and the service functions of the institution” (Knight, 1993, p. 21), an approach supported by the NUS. The NUS added that the value of international students to UK universities, “goes well beyond the significant financial return they deliver” (NUS, 2016, p. 1).

The debate over the role internationalisation should play in universities has been ongoing for many years and becomes intertwined with issues around the impact of globalisation on education. Cogburn and Adeya (1999) wrote that globalisation was not just about the deepening of financial markets, but includes a whole range of social, political, economic, and cultural phenomena. In studies exploring the interconnectedness of internationalisation and globalisation with respect to higher education, globalisation was evaluated, “as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life” (Bray, 2003, p. 220).

Carnoy (1999) detailed the ways in which globalisation was having a major impact on education when referring to the financial pressures of governments to reduce the growth of public spending and release funds for the expected expansion of their own educational systems. There was also the need to attract foreign capital, and this meant providing a ready supply of skilled labour. In their review of globalisation and educational change, Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) also introduced the issue of whether educational change represented regional, national, or local responses to global reconstructing, and to what

degree these changes represent international agencies' intentions regarding these responses.

In continuing the debate as to 'Why Internationalise Education?' it was argued that, "despite its long history it is hard to understand why anyone would still question the need for this response by those directly responsible for delivering education" (Coelen, 2015, p. 4). De Wit and Hunter (2015, p. 2) suggested that, "internationalisation of higher education is a relatively new phenomenon but, as a concept, it is one that is both broad and varied". In their work for the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI) De Wit and Hunter (op. cit.) analysed results from ten European and seven rest of the world countries and identified ten key developments in internationalisation including its growing importance, an evident shift from cooperation to (more) competition, emerging regionalisation (particularly outside Europe), and "notable emerging areas of focus, in particular internationalisation of the curriculum, transnational education and digital learning" (2015, p. 2). De Wit (2011) listed nine misconceptions about internationalisation referring to his view that, previously, the reasons for internationalisation were mainly political and socio-cultural but now economic reasons were now gaining ground and there is a stronger accent on content-related considerations.

Additionally, Coelen (2015) pointed to several factors how, by 2030, some 66% of the global middle class will live in the Asia-Pacific region which will increase the demand for higher education. This would also facilitate the development of a much-enhanced network of significant global urban centres. Coelen (op. cit.) also cited the results of a survey carried out by the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE, 2009), that 50% of those polled predicted that by 2030 the most important source of knowledge will

be available as online content, necessitating decisions by UK universities as to whether or when they consider involvement in online delivery integral to their activities.

Beelan and Jones (2015) further noted internationalisation is now included in the educational policies of 64% of higher education institutions. However, referring to the speed of internationalisation in higher education, they suggested that, “the focus is, however, shifting slowly and more is imagined than achieved” (Beelan and Jones 2015, p. 12). In the USA, Deardorff (2005, p. 28) noted that there has been a move towards more, “student-negotiated outcomes” by HEIs. She proposed a more effective assessment of specific outcomes for students centred on international competence and global workforce preparedness was required and highlighted the importance of outcomes assessment being incorporated into the fabric of the learning, student development through application of knowledge and skills.

3.2.3 Conflict in education

This thesis has considered the effects of conflict on approaches of families and students for additional education including any repercussions on decision-making regarding the selection of overseas higher education. This thesis will add to previous work assessing the outcome of conflict on educational decision-making in Nepal. It was established that, “expansion of education can marginalise many groups within society” when referring primarily to the supply, demand and quality of secondary education on the different ethnic groups (Shields, 2013, p. 21). Around the time of the ten-year civil war in Nepal (discussed in Chapter two), issues around conflict and education were also being studied by Davies (2004) who raised two issues. Firstly, the relationship between education and conflict includes the impact of war and violence on education delivery. Secondly, the

effect on education pedagogy of conflict itself leads to, “the reproduction or amplification of inequality, exclusion and social polarization; through the hardening of ethnic or religious identifications and divisions” (Davies 2004, p. 359).

In theoretical work on educational transfer and conflict, Paulson and Rappleve (2007, p. 252) noted that Machel (2001) had previously argued that education was an essential pillar in humanitarian response to conflict. References in the literature support the view that, “Education and conflict, as an emerging field within comparative education, cannot escape this paradox” (Paulson and Rappleve, 2007, p. 2).

3.3 Section Two

3.3.1 Student mobility

This thesis uses the definition of student mobility as, “any opportunity for students to work or study abroad whilst undertaking their degree programme – whether undergraduate or postgraduate” (University of Glasgow, 2017). In Europe there has been a long history of student exchanges through the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus) established in 1997. Erasmus+ (2014) is the latest European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport. The physical move abroad, as study period, work placement or work experience represents, “an unmediated form of international contact which sets the specific learning experience it produces directly into the student’s life” (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002, p. 3). Montgomery (2010) noted that travelling abroad has been a part of education for centuries. Forsey et al. (2011, p. 128) argue that, “Exchange is an opportunity to broaden horizons, enhance global understanding and increase cultural literacy”.

A major conclusion reached in the UNESCO report (2009) was that Western countries were the dominant student destinations, especially the US, UK, France, Germany and Australia. Students generally flow from the developing world, predominantly to English-language countries. However, The British Council (2012) argued that the same assumptions can no longer be made. Countries that previously supplied students were now hosting students themselves. With increasing options available, changes to where students were choosing to study were observed by UNESCO (2009) as more are now staying closer to home. As an example of opting to stay within a regional context, Ahmad (2016, p. 2) noted that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) attracted more students from the Arab States than the UK and that, “the KSA and UAE had become the third most popular destination after France and the United States of America (USA) for attracting students from the region for tertiary education”.

It was seen in Chapter one that new destinations were emerging and challenging the traditional destinations, although the US and UK remain important choices for Nepalese students. The British Council (2012) summarised that some of these emerging destinations, including Singapore, Malaysia and the UAE, were often described as, and strive to be known as, education hubs. Other countries, of which China is a key example, follow a different model of higher education that focuses on the expansion of local provision, reducing reliance on international providers.

Research by Choudaha et al. (2013) on international student mobility trends evidenced that there had been changing patterns of mobility for higher education over the previous ten years as Asian countries had adopted a wide range of mechanisms and strategies in facilitating student mobility. The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (2009, p.

1) stated that in, “an attempt to attract the growing number of prospective students seeking higher education, individual institutions and national governments are looking to differentiate themselves from their competitors”. The increasing emphasis on regional competition, including Western universities with transnational programmes, meant an intensifying challenge to attract international students. A similar conclusion was reached by The British Council (2012) in their report on higher education global trends and emerging opportunities to 2020.

The British Council report (op. cit.) explained that student mobility has become increasingly complex when considering external influences. The report (op. cit.) referred to national policies on education and immigration as well as individual influences including friend and family networks, teachers, the media and perceptions in popular culture. The British Council (op. cit.) further suggested that it was possible that emerging destinations can present a real challenge to traditional providers. For example, China may expand its own education provision rather than becoming an educational centre of overseas students, although, “it has [an] ambitious international student recruitment growth target of approximately 250,000 students for 2020” (British Council, 2012, p. 5.).

Exchanges of students have become increasingly two way and countries such as India and China are developing their own higher education infrastructure and trying to attract international students in competition with traditional players such as the United States, the UK and Australia. However, Choudaha, et al (2013) concluded that the growing competition for international students between domestic and foreign HEIs poses questions over quality assurance for host countries in Asia. Although the reasons for studying abroad have been seen to vary from country to country, King et al (2010) examined why

UK students chose to study abroad. The reasons given were: to improve their cultural awareness (98%); attend a world-class university (89%); it gave an opportunity for a unique adventure (88%). Further reasons given by UK students were: making job interviews more successful (87%); using evidence from study abroad on their CV (86%); employers are more likely to employ someone who has studied abroad (75%); a step towards an international career (69%). King et al (2010) also suggested, that to a large extent, the evidence between mobility and employability was the missing link in the argument for overseas study, at least for UK students.

An alternative view was expressed by Brooks et al. (2012) who found there was little evidence to suggest that UK students studying abroad were seeking an overseas education as a strategic means of either accumulating cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) or securing labour market advantage. Hence employability or careers were not always the most important factor for overseas students from all countries. Research for UNESCO by Varghese (2008) concluded that the advantages of study abroad programmes for quality education were viewed as greater in developing countries than in developed countries. Overseas qualifications have been seen as conferring substantial advantage within domestic labour markets when graduates return to their home country. Ong (1999), for example, showed the importance of studying abroad in the pursuit of distinction for Asian students. Bodycott (2009) together with Rizvi (2000), established the importance of future employability in decisions about whether to study abroad, also amongst Asian students, but noted the importance of this factor varied according to their nationality. For example, Bodycott (2009), suggested that for Chinese students, improved employment opportunities were rated as more important by students than by their parents. (Further

details of the rating factors that attract and influence decision-making about a study abroad decision from Bodycott's research (2009) are in Appendix 3).

In 1990 the first Human Development Report introduced a new approach for advancing human wellbeing. Human development – or the human development approach - is about expanding the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live. It is an approach that is focused on people and their opportunities and choices. The HDI can be seen as an alternative to using Gross National Income (GNI) as a measure of the national wealth. The Human Development Indicator (HDI) introduced a more comprehensive range of factors to assess well-being.

The key components of an HDI value are defined as a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. The HDI (UNDP, 2015) emphasises that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone. The HDI can also be used to question national policy choices, asking how two countries with the same level of GNI per capita can end up with different human development outcomes. The HDI figures for Nepal released by The United Nations Development Organisation (UNDP, HDR, 2016) ranked Nepal 144th out of 188 countries assessed with an HDI score of 0.548 (against 0.666 for all developing countries); using HDI as the measure, the UK was in 14th position with a higher HDI score of 0.907.

Table 4 gives the position of Nepal in the UN HDI for 2015 along with comparative country figures which rank the HDI scores as Very High, High, Medium and Low.

Table 4: Human Development Index Country Scores

HDI	Country	Rank /188	HDI Value
Very High	Norway	1	0.944
	UK	14	0.907
High	Brazil	75	0.755
Medium	India	130	0.609
Low	Nepal	144	0.548
	Pakistan	147	0.538
	Niger	188	0.348

Source: UNDP (2015). International Human Development Indicators.

Migration of workers and non-returning graduates from overseas education raises the issue of brain drain. Brain drain defined as, “the international transfer of resources in the form of human capital and mainly applies to the migration of relatively highly educated individuals from developing to developed countries” Beine et al, 2008, p. 631). In considering the economic impact of brain drain within the context of human capital formation Beine et al (2008, p. 648) found:

“The brain drain has long been viewed as a serious constraint on poor countries development. However, recent theoretical literature suggests that migration prospects can raise the expected return to human capital and foster investment in education at home.”

From an economic perspective, the argument presented by Bhattarai (2011) supports the work of Beine et al (op. cit.). Bhattarai (op. cit.) argued that remittances from Nepalese workers, including graduates, staying overseas could be seen not as brain drain but ‘brain gain’ in that, “56% of all households in Nepal receive remittances and account for

approximately 25% of Nepalese GDP. The amount of money received has surpassed the incomes received from tourism and national exports for the last three consecutive years (to 2016) and income from remittances has helped toward poverty alleviation” (NRA, 2017, p. 1).

However, Brooks and Waters (2013) argued that the term brain drain was now becoming discredited. Supporting this view (Brooks and Waters, op. cit.) Manandhar (2010) had established that 84% of Chinese students and 72% of Indian students returned home after overseas studies attributing this to more attractive work opportunities in their home country. The ONS (2017) also confirmed, although the numbers were still subject to further clarification, that international students normally left the UK after completing their studies.

Previously Murphy-Lejeune (2002) proposed that students might be thought of as ‘double’ agents that could be considered as outgoing from their country of origin and as incoming to their chosen country of study. However, Subedi (2007) in his research on labour migration from Nepal, categorised student migration to the UK as ‘brain circulation’ a more acceptable interpretation than ‘brain waste’ to designate and understand the phenomenon of student migration. Hall (2011) reasoned that temporary or permanent migration, regardless of money flow, should be seen as ‘brain loss’. He argued that migration for some Nepalese workers would be a successful strategy for Nepal if they return with new skills which can enrich Nepal’s human resources. There remains an ongoing debate (Manandhar, 2010; Bhattarai, 2011; Hall, 2011) as to whether international graduates from developing countries, such as Nepal, are an advantage to the economy of the sending country or should be encouraged to return home after graduation.

Hall observed that migration for many from Nepal is an, “act of desperation” (Hall, 2011, p. 141) given few employment opportunities in Nepal and the need to support their families. In addition, “Returnees may become the target of hostility from longer settled inhabitants, fearful that their jobs and land are under threat from the newcomers” Hall (op. cit.). Hall (op. cit.) suggested Britain and other nations giving aid could help by targeting developments in ways which may assisted in reducing the original causes of migration.

In discussing the increased demand for graduates capable of working in other countries, Jones (2013, p. 95) observed that:

“Some of the skills required to function effectively in these contexts have been shown to be developed through international mobility experiences and yet the connection between these outcomes and the generic transferable skills requirements of graduate employers have rarely been made. The same is increasingly true for business programmes and more vocationally-oriented study in, for example, tourism, hospitality or public relations.”

Patterns of mobility favouring Western educational institutions, including UK universities, seem to be changing as new opportunities, including two-way exchange schemes, open closer to the home country of students. Although there are differences in views from one country or culture to another, the reasons why students study overseas are linked to the experience of studying abroad but mainly improving career or employment prospects.

3.3.2 Destination choice

Murphy-Lejeune (2002 p.79) hypothesised that there were three elements when discussing students’ decisions to study overseas and the student experience. These included dreams and what were described as, “forces presiding over a decision which

directly influences the decision-making process and expectations and the evaluation of outcomes” (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002 p. 79). Singh and Doherty (2004) noted that Asian international students travel to Western universities to acquire Western credentials and expertise because qualifications from Western universities offer greater employment opportunities and geographic mobility when considering occupations available to them globally (Luke, 2001; Rizvi, 2000).

In a quantitative survey conducted by the British Council (2012) into overseas study decision-making of international students, 153,000 responses were collected over a five-year period from 2007. The survey was designed to gain opinions *before* actual experiences of UK education. Seven focus groups were conducted among school pupils, current university students and education consultants. Findings showed that students wanted a high-quality, internationally recognised education from highly reputable institutions that are respected by potential employers. The report highlighted issues surrounding labelling destination countries with assigned characteristics based on hearsay and imagined reputation rather than factual or first-hand experience. Importantly, issues surrounding national policies regarding study visas and immigration as well as personal safety were associated with destination choices as well as issues around transnational education destinations (British Council, 2012).

Transnational destinations were defined by the British Council (2012) as a, “mixed bag of emerging destinations that act as hubs pulling together both national and international education organisations [but] are not clearly defined enough for students to understand their value” (MacGregor, 2012, p. 1). Pietro, at the UK Work, Pensions and Labour Economics Study Group (WPEG) conference, in assessing the benefits of studying abroad

in Erasmus schemes maintained there were convincing arguments about the importance of study abroad programmes with a, “relatively large and statistically meaningful effect on the probability of being in employment three years after graduation” (WPEG, 2013, p. 2).

The International Student Survey (ISS, 2015) received responses from 45,000 prospective international students from 210 countries and 207 nationalities; 17,336 of those had enquired to UK institutions. The survey results provided an understanding of the perceptions prospective international students place on an international education. One of the objectives of the ISS study (op. cit.) was to recommend what the UK could do to stand out in the increasingly competitive market for higher education. Improving future earnings and securing a job after graduation were the two most important reasons given.

In the ISS 2014 Overview Report for Australia, the reputation of the chosen institution (94%), Australia’s education system (93%), the quality of research and teaching at chosen institution (91%) and personal safety (92%) were the principal reasons given for choosing an Australian higher education institution.

Reay et al. (2005) advised that international students pay more attention to the status of the university while Russell (2005) similarly highlighted the importance of a specific institution’s reputation for attracting students. In the USA, Amorim (2015) in a qualitative study of international PhD students showed the importance of a doctorate degree for a professional career. If ‘students’ already have permanent jobs in their home country, promotion was one of the key motives and ‘difference’ was also a factor.

As an alternative methodology, Wilkins et al (2011) in reviewing motivations for choosing to study overseas proposed a model of international student destination choice which incorporated two distinct sets of push and pull factors, one set that applies to the home campuses of Western universities and one set that applied to international branch campuses. Grigg (1977) recorded that push and pull theory, developed by Ravenstein in the late nineteenth century, was used to explain factors that influenced migration of people. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) were able to show an intention to migrate after graduation was an important factor influencing demand for overseas education.

Wilkins et al. (op. cit.) established that the most common push factors in destination choice were lack of capacity and opportunities, lower educational quality, employer preference for overseas education, the unavailability of particular subjects, and political and economic problems in the students' home countries. The pull factors most often mentioned included quality of education and reputation of country/institution, high rankings, improved employment prospects, opportunity to improve English language skills and opportunity to experience a different culture. Personal and human factors are also important in determining student choices, such as individual attitudes to religion and safety, as well as the influence of recommendations from family, friends, teachers and agents.

Mazarrol and Soutar's (2002) examined the motivations of 2,485 students who had gone from four different Asian countries who had gone to Australia to study on a post-secondary programme and concluded that push factors operated within the source country to initiate the student's decision to study overseas, while pull factors operated in the host country to attract students to that particular country over other countries. It was suggested

that, “virtually all of the research on international student motivations and decision criteria has also adopted the ‘push-pull’ framework.” (Wilkins, op. cit. p. 3).

Bodycott (2009) identified the differences in the influence of push factors between mainland Chinese (excluding Hong Kong) parents and students. For parents, international/intercultural experience was the highest ranked factor, but for students immigration prospects and strong economic growth were highest ranked. Hong Kong students saw UK education as providing the foundation for an exclusive and “elite identity” (Waters, 2007, p. 478). However, in the results of Bodycott’s (op. cit.) study, gaining an experience of ‘Western’ culture was ranked one of the less attractive factors by both Chinese parents and students. Results of the research by Bodycott (2009) also showed that the international standing and reputation of the institution are important but rated higher by Chinese parents than students.

Bodycott (op. cit.) also recorded that although Chinese students were asked to identify more factors for their decision-making they were unable to. However, Bodycott (op. cit.) indicated that for Chinese students confronting or disagreeing with parents could be seen as a sign of disrespect. His results, contrary to later findings of the British Council (2012), showed that obtaining a student visa for study was not, at the time of his research, a major consideration for Chinese parents or students. The full list of Bodycott’s (2009) parents’ and students’ rating of factors that push them to seek study abroad programmes can be found in Appendix 4.

Davison-Lund (2009) in her work on becoming interculturally competent reported that Chinese parents were so desperate for their children to succeed in the country’s university entrance exam that they enrolled them in ‘super schools’ (Davidsun-Lund, 2009, p. 48)

with punishing regimes. In rural China, “a top gaokao (score) can lift the fortune of an entire family, promising a life beyond the fields for generations to come - based on the principles of the keju, an ancient imperial civil service exam” (Davison-Lund, 2009, p. 51). Keju introduced a measure of meritocracy into China’s education system in that it offered students with few social or economic advantages places at the most prestigious institutions.

The children of families who are sent abroad to study are described by Tsong and Liu (2008) as “parachute kids” for children abroad alone and “satellite children” or “astronaut families” (Kang and Abelman, 2011, p. 93) are used in cases where children are abroad with one parent. Waters (2002) earlier reported that most well documented cases of disruptions to family life are often Hong Kong Chinese and Taiwanese in Canada where business/wealth immigration programmes lure wealthy families. Families later become transnational split families when one or both parents return to Hong Kong or Taiwan for better work opportunities.

Other findings from Davison-Lund (op. cit.) revealed that the student's family was the most frequently mentioned 'main source' of funds. The most positive influences were the student's mother, father and a close friend. Davison-Lund noted (op. cit.) noted that as so many students came from privileged families (in terms of perceived socio-economic status and parents' educational level) any advantages that might accrue from study abroad would benefit only these students, but not those from disadvantaged backgrounds. It was clear from this study that if levels of mobility were to increase for those who were not from higher socio-economic groups, appropriate funding mechanisms and advice needed to be available.

With so many options, it has been recognised that students needed help in completing application forms, obtaining a visa and accommodation. It was shown in the ISS (2015) report that agents were responsible for advising over 50% of students coming to Australia for education. From the results of a study by the British Council (2011a) designed to look at students' perceptions to gain an insight into how they have been treated by agents found that, often, agents had bad reputations. The British Council study (op. cit.) gave examples of the poor experience received by students and their sponsors from agents and Bodycott (2009) recognised that there was a need for international staff to pay greater attention to cultural values when looking to recruit students from Confucian societies.

3.3.3 Educational decision-making theory

Kotler (1997) identified a five-stage process in decision-making from problem recognition, through information search, and evaluation of alternatives, through to purchase and post-purchase evaluation. Brennan (2001) in her study of home and international students attending Victoria University in Australia questioned whether students actually make *rational* purchasing choices about the universities they eventually attend. Brennan (op. cit.) looked towards consumer decision-making models in marketing theory, developed primarily by Howard and Sheth (1969) as a more promising approach for establishing the reasons why students chose a particular university. The model Brennan developed which represented a problem-solving form of decision-making implied that customers follow a series of steps in a hierarchical and sequential fashion and are interested and involved in the product category (Selnes and Troye, 1989; Howard and Sheth et al. (op. cit.).

Purchase behaviour was shown to be influenced by the level of involvement in the purchasing decision. The level of involvement ranges from high involvement, described as extensive problem solving by Howard (1977), to low involvement. Education is ‘high involvement’ and Browne and Kaldenberg (1997) show that under high involvement conditions, buyer decision processes are thought to proceed through extended decision-making, a series of sequential stages involving information search and evaluation of criteria. However, Tanner and Raymond (2016) show that high-involvement decisions can cause buyers a great deal of post-purchase dissonance (anxiety) if they are unsure about their purchases or if they had a difficult time deciding between two alternatives.

Athiyaman (1977) argued that delivering quality service had become an important goal for most HEIs exploring the relationship between consumer satisfaction and perceived quality using a scenario specific to higher education. In his work Athiyaman noted that practitioners often assumed that, “quality service is the same as consumer satisfaction” (Athiyaman, 1997, p. 539). His paper constitutes an attempt to clarify the conceptual definitions of these two variables by stating:

“Perceived service quality is defined as an overall evaluation of the goodness or badness of a product or service. In other words, it is an attitude. Consumer satisfaction is similar to attitude, but it is short-term and results from an evaluation of a specific consumption experience” (Athiyaman, 1997, p. 539).

In an analysis of 496 cases Athiyaman could show that perceived service quality was an important influence on students’ post-enrolment communication behaviour. He concluded, “Finally, it is hoped that this paper would stimulate more research into the antecedents and consequences of service quality” (Athiyaman, 1997, p. 539).

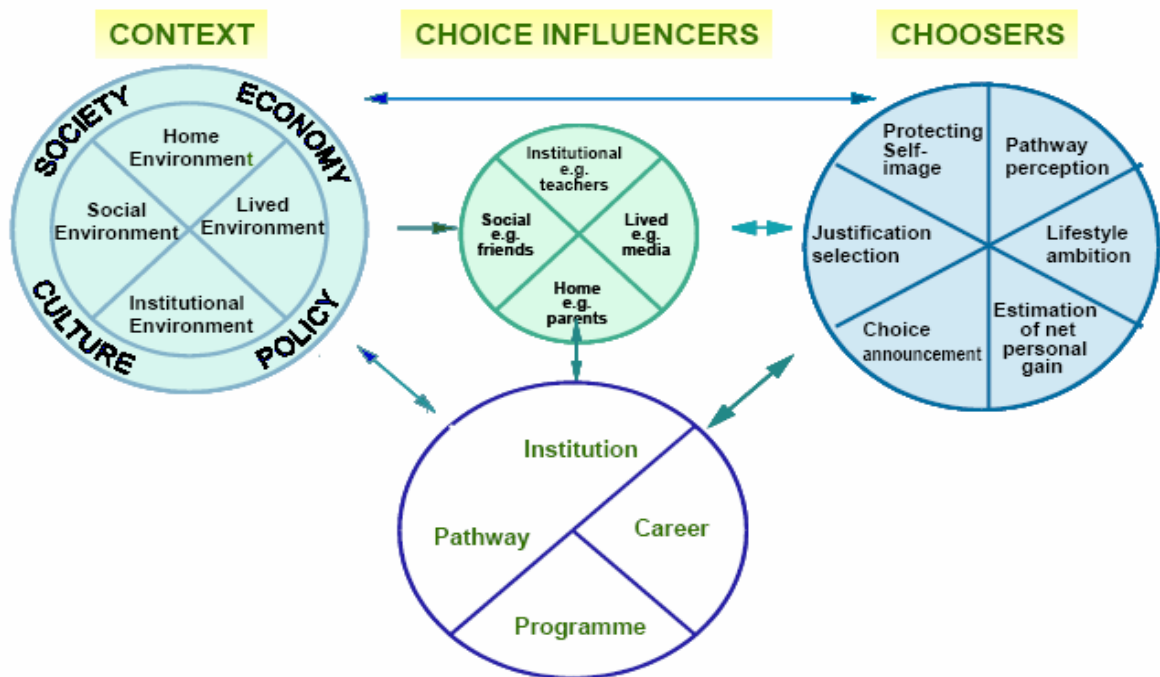
These previous quantitative studies into student satisfaction or experience contained little or no information on graduate or employer experience or expectations of UK business

studies graduates or employers. No studies were found on the suitability of UK business degrees for enhancing employment opportunities for Nepalese business graduates and there was very little information from any international business graduates on the experience of UK education for employment in their home country.

3.3.3.1 Integrated models of educational decision-making

From 1994, Hemsley-Brown, and Foskett, (2001) began development of an integrated model of educational choice detailed in Figure 5. In explaining their research Hemsley-Brown and Foskett, (2001, p.1) refer to, “unique perceptual models held by each person, which provide a unique input into the choice making process; that any form of guidance, information or input from a third party is itself the product of that individual's own personal perceptions and the importance within media communications of the creation of image”.

Figure 5. Integrated model of educational choice



Source: Hemsley, Brown and Foskett (2001)

Although the model developed by Hemsley- Brown and Foskett (2001) was detailed on students' 'choice influencers', Arambewela and Hall (2008) concluded that research on the post-choice behaviour, particularly regarding their satisfaction with study destinations, was limited. In her work, Rounsaville, (2011), was able to show that, although there have been many previous studies, it was still possible to add to the knowledge of the educational decision-making process of international students.

3.3.4 Culture

Asian international students are unlikely to take up Western knowledge uncritically and, "buy into the 'West is best' model" (Luke, 2001, p. 41). It was suggested that, "classrooms are likely to be sites of struggle and challenges over the selection and enactment of curricula and teaching strategies and concluded that, holistic, tightly bounded notions of culture no longer adequately inform pedagogic practice in these globalised and globalising sites [institutions]" (Singh and Doherty, 2004 p. 1). In work on academic performance, Neri and Ville, 2008, p. 35) concluded that:

"students from Western countries do better than those from non-Western countries. If this result is in large measure due to familiarity with Western educational practices and philosophies, as we suggest, then educators could give some thought to designing and implementing appropriate programs to better inculcate non-Western international students with the general practices and expectations of Western educational institutions."

Coelen (2015) concluded that the skills, attitudes, and knowledge required to be multi-culturally effective should become more significant in a student's development than they have been. Coelen (2015 further argued that many companies in Europe should recruit graduates from outside of their home country to compensate for a lack of suitable domestic graduates and that employing graduates from various countries would create

intercultural workplaces. Coelen (op. cit.) also suggested that global changes act to create a future in which intercultural contact will be the norm, rather than the exception.

“Based on data generated from intercultural scholars through Deardorff’s (2004) ‘Delphi’ study, the top-rated definition was one in which intercultural competence was defined as, “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 194). Although Deardorff claimed consensus had not been reached on the definition of intercultural competence, the common elements of the definition were, “the awareness, valuing, and understanding of cultural differences; experiencing other cultures; and self-awareness of one’s own culture” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247). She, “concluded that, “it is possible to assess degrees of intercultural competence and in so doing, that it is best to use a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to assess intercultural competence, including interviews, observation, and judgment by self and others (Deardorff, 2006, p. 241). She described her study as, “the first study to document consensus among top intercultural scholars on the definition and assessment methods of intercultural competence” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 261).

Peterson (2014, p.59) stated that in the US, “many of the students in marketing classrooms have not had direct experience with cultural environments other than their own” and that most business schools (in the US) were not pursuing higher levels of internationalisation with the aim of, specifically obtaining greater global understanding and international expertise among their students (Tyagia, 2001). Forsey et al (2011) argued that, “Several studies (Dwyer and Peters, 2004; Ingraham and Peterson, 2004; Nunan, 2006) have shown that studying abroad expands students’ outlooks, makes them more independent and confident, and increases their intercultural competencies” (p. 130). Feng et al. (2009)

discuss the problem of assessing cultural awareness, which is taken forward in this thesis through the use of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's IAP profiling in terms of cultural competence.

In 2017, Huang (2017) argued that students' development of intercultural competence should be considered an important educational outcome of institutional internationalisation. Huang (op. cit.) also argued that students' development of intercultural competence has shifted from an added value side effect to an all-pervasive motive in a market driven and globalised educational sector which led to the development of a programme for activity based intercultural education.

Lantz-Deaton (2017) added the view that internationalisation rhetoric argues that students studying on internationally diverse campuses will automatically engage positively with one another and develop intercultural competency. However, his findings from a study of first year UK and non-UK students were that,

“Even positive intercultural experiences do not necessarily lead to the development of intercultural competence and that university and policy may need to be enhanced if producing graduates with higher levels of intercultural competence is to become a realised outcome of internationalisation” Lantz-Deaton, 2017, p. 532).

Lantz-Deaton (2017) offers the conclusion that, “until intercultural development is recognised as a process of experimentation, reflection and learning, it is likely that, “students' intercultural development as a result of studying on diverse campuses will be underwhelming” (p. 532). The use of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's IAP profiling has established the importance of an understanding of intercultural competence, defined by Deardorff in the Sage Handbook of International Competence (2010) as, “*appropriate and effective communication, as well as behaviour in intercultural situations.*”

Working in another country or returning home after absence overseas can raise the issue of culture shock. There are many definitions of culture shock dating back to 1944 when Schmutz (1944) examined the difficulties of returning armed forces veterans in the USA. UKCISA (2017b) described culture shock with reference to the five stages in the ‘W’ curve model developed by Barker (1990). These stages, which assess the impact of moving from a familiar culture to one which is unfamiliar, are described as: honeymoon, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy and independence. The description of culture shock by UKCISA (2017b) is similar to the definition of Oberg (1960, p. 177) in that:

“Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse.”

Much of the work into culture shock either relates to the impact on teaching and learning whilst studying overseas, or the significance of ‘reverse culture shock’ when returning home. Reverse culture shock, as defined in work by Gaw, (2000, p. 83):

“is the process of readjusting, re-aculturating, and re-assimilating into one's own home culture after living in a different culture for a significant period of time.”

Although it will not be possible to generalise extensively from this thesis research, findings from the interviews with UK educated Nepalese graduates and their employers will help UK universities better understand the priority that graduates and their employers place on intercultural development and the effectiveness of any teaching on the subject as well as implementation of intercultural awareness skills in a graduate’s employment.

3.4 Section Three

Section three considers the difficulties in obtaining data from graduates on achievement and outcomes. My thesis differs from ongoing satisfaction surveys in that it is based on the reflections of graduates who have returned to Nepal. Reflection has been described as, “a process of reviewing an experience of practice to describe, analyse, evaluate and so

inform learning about practice” (Reid 1993, p. 305). It was noted by the UK Council for International Education (UKCOSA) (2003) that there were problems of access to international students for researching graduate achievements and outcomes. No previous research has been found on the post-graduation experiences of Nepalese students. This thesis therefore overcomes a limitation seen in previous work that, “the reflections from students and/or graduates are often limited to experiences of short term student exchanges between European Union institutions, rather than considering full-term international students studying abroad and returning home after studies” (Brooks and Waters, 2013, p.2).

Results of a trend analysis from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (2014), as sponsors of The National Student Survey (NSS), for the period 2005-2013 showed that the percentage of students agreeing with each of the six NSS question scales and the overall satisfaction question increased over that period. Regular, ongoing annual quantitative studies are also undertaken in the UK amongst postgraduate and research students including the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES).

However, most research takes place amongst current students as they are much easier to reach. UKCOSA (op. cit.) further inferred that studies (referring to the NSS) yielded little information on achievement and outcomes but concentrated on ambitions, including motivations for studying abroad, or students’ present experiences including emotional, affective and pedagogical issues. It was seen that, “Few studies report any attempt to obtain data on past international student academic performance (this may be because universities are somewhat reluctant to divulge this information)” (UKCOSA, 2003, p. 18).

3.4.1 Research into the student experience

Dwyer and Wyn (2000) suggested that few UK students believe a degree offers more than a “basic minimum within a competitive graduate labour market” and report widespread pessimism about a degree providing a pathway to professional employment. Brooks and Everett (2009) provided an alternative interpretation of Dwyer and Wyn’s (2000) suggestion noting, “a seeming acceptance of the inevitable credential inflation and the necessity to compensate, specialise and ‘gain the edge’ (in a largely individualistic and competitive manner) post-graduation” (p. 346). Brooks and Everett (2009) interviewed 90 ‘self-selecting’ young adults in the UK and concluded that the issues of ‘disillusionment and disappointment’ with employability outcomes that Dwyer and Wyn (2000) uncovered were not evident. They concluded, therefore, that student expectations about the certainty of obtaining good employment have changed.

In a departure from existing qualitative methods of measuring student satisfaction, Woodall et al. (2014) introduced the concept of ‘value’ in their assessment of student satisfaction. Their research examined the meaning of ‘customer value’ amongst 320 undergraduates and postgraduates in one institution over a three-year period and evidenced distinct differences between home and international students. For home students it is a trade-off between price and attributes, whilst for international students they observed that balancing results for the student (outcomes) and acquisition costs was of more relevance. They also confirmed mixed results from researchers trying to find a causal link between value and satisfaction and that between-study comparisons are not easy to make. They also argued that comparisons between their results and others concerning the home/international dyad prove problematic.

Woodall (op. cit.), observed that the lack of further evidence from developing countries represented an important gap in knowledge and,

“It would also, clearly, be useful to repeat our study in other institutions to ascertain whether outcomes hold beyond the (Business) school, and to establish whether, in our own context, further segmentation of either the home or international groups might reveal further cultural or socio-economic insights – or, even, suggest some bias in our results. It was also undertaken before variable tuition fees were introduced into the United Kingdom” (2014. p. 63).

Early studies assessing the impact of studying overseas, such as that undertaken by Carlson et al. (1990) of 76 respondents from one institution in the US suggest that studying abroad resulted in increased educational attainment and influences on career direction and practices. Paige et al. (2009), in a mixed methods study, developed a ‘Global Engagement Survey’ which was taken by over 6,000 alumni from 21 institutions. For their qualitative research component, Paige et al. (op. cit.) undertook three case studies which demonstrate through life stories the positive impact of studying abroad. They identified five global engagement variables: civic engagement; voluntary simplicity; knowledge production; philanthropy and social entrepreneurship. Results from alumni show that study abroad has to a large or some extent helped 75.1% of respondents, in varying amounts across these variables.

Akande and Slawson (2000) called for larger scale and more comprehensive studies based on a more representative sample of all study abroad students. Brooks and Waters found that students own perspectives, “on their motivations, objectives and experiences were limited” (2013, p. 2). Deardorff (2015) explored the influences on outcomes of factors such as students’ backgrounds and prior experiences and viewing students not as a monolithic group, but as ‘diverse individuals’ (Baird 2003). Hence differing conclusions have been reached on the values home and international students place on

their higher education. The work of Pool and Sewell (2007) in the UK highlighted the need for student/graduate reflection on learning experiences as a precursor of their future action which supports the objectives and value of this thesis.

The concluding part of this section reviews literature on the attributes graduates and employers expect from UK education and includes references to work experience in Business Studies degrees. Graduate attributes have been defined by Edinburgh Napier University (2015) as:

“Qualities, skills and understandings that a student should develop as a consequence of the learning they engage with on their programme of study. This sense of ‘graduateness’ is therefore what distinguishes them from individuals who have not studied at degree level and is the added value they offer to employers and society generally. Moreover, they provide a framework for engaging with the world and with ongoing learning of new knowledge. As such they transcend the disciplinary context in which they were originally acquired.”

Mishra (2014) commented on the growing mismatch between graduate skills and the skills required for employment, leading Varghese (2014) to suggest that as technology and skill sets are changing quickly it is not possible to alter the university curriculum to keep pace with those changes. every time that happens. Frawley and Harvey (2015) in a survey for the HEA referred to the potential of longitudinal graduate surveys in providing evidence about the extent to which graduates were using the knowledge and skills acquired in their course and how employers require and utilise the increasingly highly-qualified pool of graduates available to them. They also show how, “the expansion of higher education has changed the nature of employment opportunities” (Frawley and Harvey, 2015, p .6).

However, Manandhar in an EIU Report (2013) for the British Council advised that in second and third tier Nepalese institutions there was criticism of the teaching delivery, which has had a negative impact on students’ analytical abilities and critical thinking

skills. In Nepal, the disconnect between the needs of the market and the courses offered by HEIs has contributed to high levels of graduate unemployment and underemployment. Unemployment was said to have forced countries such as Nepal to provide collateral free loans to spur entrepreneurship amongst unemployed educated youths. The EIU report (2013) advised of further opportunities for UK universities if they were able to demonstrate the added value to employers of their courses and their graduates in meeting the shortfall of skills. The research into employability of graduates discussed in the next section compares European, including UK graduates and employer perspectives towards employability.

3.4.2 Graduate employability

It has been argued that employability issues are, “at the very heart of contemporary higher education in the UK” (Crammer, 2006, p. 169). Brown and Tannock (2009) concluded that whilst higher education has expanded in many countries producing many more graduates for domestic markets. Competition for talent in a globalised economy meant more specific global opportunities and ‘home’ educated graduates may be attracted to take up opportunities in other countries. Andrews and Higson (2008) analysed graduate and employer perspectives of graduate employability opportunities arising from studying business degrees in four European countries, the (UK, Austria, Slovenia and Romania); a total of 50 people were interviewed across the four countries. Their study identified knowledge of marketing, finance and human resource management as helpful towards subsequent employment but there were significant issues concerning putting knowledge into practice. Andrews and Higson (op. cit.) further established the need for improvements in presentation and communication skills which are seen by the Chartered Institute of

Personnel Development (CIPD, 2017) as the key to achieving personal and organisational goals.

In a review of employability skills of graduates from UK Universities, Brooks and Everett (2009) evidenced that UK students had different perceptions to Asian students of the potential a degree has for supporting postgraduate employability. Brooks and Everett (2009) also found that UK graduates were less likely than graduates from other European countries to think that their study programme provided a good basis for starting work but, like other European graduates, they would still have chosen the same programme at the same institution again. UK graduates were also less likely than graduates in other European countries to describe their study programme as vocationally orientated, and more likely to describe it as academically prestigious

It was seen by Brooks and Everett (2009) that UK students generally were very different from Asian students in that they see employment advantages as a principal strategic motivator for an overseas education. Brooks and Waters (2011) reported that in certain countries an overseas qualification leads to enhanced employment opportunities. A study by Rizvi (2000) also confirmed enhanced employment opportunities for Malaysian students studying in Australia. In this way, this thesis will add to work by Pool and Sewell (2007, p.16) which noted that, “so much research points to work experience as being something that prospective employers value greatly in graduates”.

3.4.3 Developing an international curriculum

The definition of an international curriculum cited by Hall (2003), adopted by the OECD (1995) and used in this thesis, emphasises that a curriculum must address the needs of local as well as international students. It describes an international curriculum as having

an international orientation in content; being aimed at preparing students for performing professionally and socially in an international and multicultural context, and designed for domestic students as well as foreign students. Bonfiglio (1999) concluded that an internationalised curriculum was more than just a collection of courses, but rather a preparatory measure for students as they enter life and work in a global society. Edwards et al. (2003) concluded that the higher education sector has been revising its aims and objectives to incorporate an international dimension into the skills and knowledge development of its students. Edwards et al. (op. cit.) suggested a three-stage typology for a business curriculum: (i) internationalisation; (ii) international awareness, (iii) international competence and international expertise with the purpose of, “seeking to bridge the gap between the aims of a curriculum for internationalisation and a subject curriculum” (2003 p. 183).

Healy (2002) also argued that there was a lack of agreement about the increased importance of internationalisation in higher education. Healy (op. cit.) established that most international education was directed at developing career opportunities for international students so that they can participate in their economy when they return home. However, Healy (op. cit.) argued that scholars, for practical reasons, have sought to find educational policies and practices that can be borrowed or assimilated into their own context. Healy (op. cit.) questioned whether internationalisation results in a shift in curricula content; a view that was later reinforced with the conclusion from Nivesjo et al. (2011) that there was very little or no mention of the curriculum in the internationalisation discourses of university staff in the Higher Education White Paper (BIS, 2011a).

Given the strategic importance to UK universities of the recruitment of international students, one of the principal conclusions towards successful outcomes for student mobility was a review of teaching toolkits, in recognition of the curriculum and pedagogic needs of internationally mobile students, as explained by Singh and Doherty (2004, p. 13):

“Teachers need to update their toolkits so that the curriculum and pedagogy they design remains relevant to the needs of mobile students. As competition for the international student market increases in the global university sector, the pressure on teachers to provide relevant quality curriculum and pedagogy is likely to intensify.”

Caddell and Chatterton (2014) published a toolkit to develop and enhance a flexible curriculum. They suggested four key elements for implementing a successful programme: (i) External engagement and Partnerships (ii) Anytime, Anywhere Learning (iii) Entry, Transition, Progression, Exit and Learning Model and (iv) Personalisation and Learner Engagement.

Matherly and Tillman (2005) were able to demonstrate that students studying overseas often experience difficulties in articulating its advantages. Matherly and Tillman (2005, p. 9) suggested that to help students, advisors could ask students about an event that would demonstrate their ability to creatively solve problems by applying familiar concepts to unfamiliar situations. Students should be able to contribute to an ethnically diverse team, be self-confident, yet able to listen and learn from people whose value systems are different. Students should also be able to take personal risks and act independently, be flexible and adaptable to rapidly changing situations. They should also have a basic command of the local language, and be able to use it in practical situations and finally, and of importance for business studies students, imagine, forecast, analyse or address business situations from a different cultural perspective. The conclusion they reached was

that an international experience itself has little value for an employer, but is a way forward, with challenges, for job applicants. Matherly and Tillman, 2005 p. 9) suggested that;

“The savvy job seeker must be able to speak about this (*international*) experience in terms of the transferable skills that he or she developed while abroad and how they can be applied to the workplace. For many students, this can be an enormous challenge.”

Caddell and Chatterton (2014), Ryan and Tilbury (2013) and The HEA (2013) have conducted research on flexible pedagogies as an approach to developing a more empathetic international curriculum designed to ‘generate new thinking and practices’ for an emerging age. Their work includes four flexible learning areas: employer engagement and work-based learning; technology-enhanced learning, including online learning; new thinking in flexible pedagogy; the needs of part-time learning and learners.

3 4.4 Developments in educational marketing

The importance of marketing international education to international students in order to enhance consumer satisfaction and raise perceived quality was highlighted by Russell (2005). A marketing approach has led to improvements in areas such as brochures, web sites, and, more recently, use of popular forms of social media, including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter; blogs within an HEIs overall communications strategy leading to MacGregor (2012, p. 1) quoting the British Council to conclude that:

“Traditional providers may be able to use their strong brands to innovate in different regions of the world where operating environments are more favourable for certain customers, and where conditions allow them to blend learning styles, disciplines and their own strengths. It is possible that this new wave or ‘third generation’ is simply an opportunity for traditional hosts to prosper beyond their own borders.”

Russell (op. cit.) stressed the importance of ‘word of mouth’ in the overall communication policy and tactics, a key measure in student satisfaction and decision-making in all areas, including education. The term word of mouth has now been extended to microblogging through Twitter and similar online services as:

“Microblogging is a new type of word-of-mouth communication that combines the real-time and personal influence of traditional (offline) word of mouth with electronic word of mouth's ability to reach large audiences” (Hennig-Thurau (2015, p. 1).

In a survey of 148 colleges and universities in the USA, Reuben (2008) noted that they were beginning to embrace social media as a component of their overall marketing mix. The survey undertaken in July 2008 asked what social media the institutions were using most, how they were using it to reach their target audiences, and which department(s) at the college were responsible for maintaining it. Reuben (op cit.) identified implications for and against using social media, and discussed best practices, recommendations and considerations for higher education marketers. Although reservations have been expressed over the value of social media in reaching an international audience, its contribution was underlined by The University of Cambridge in a report which found that, “85% of our audience was outside the UK” and saw this as way to, “confound expectations. It’s a great opportunity to reset expectations of the university, what it’s for and most importantly who it’s for.” (Jee, 2015, p. 1).

Although ‘word of mouth’ is still one of the most powerful means of communication, changes in information search have taken place with the wider use and international availability of the Internet. Hence the Internet is seen not only as a tool to provide information but also as having the potential for changing user perceptions of institutions

although reservations have been expressed on whether academics can be exposed to unfair criticism.

3.5 Conclusion to Chapter Three

The literature reviewed has confirmed the strategic importance financially and culturally to UK universities and the financial benefit to the local and national UK economy of developing opportunities for increasing numbers of international students in an increasing internationally competitive market.

Research has established the criteria for overseas study decision-making, as well as evaluated the results of student satisfaction surveys. However, the majority of this work has been amongst final year undergraduates and very little literature into post-study reflections, or expectations of Nepalese graduates and employers has been found.

Several approaches have been used to further understand the decision-making process for international students and new analytical approaches have demonstrated that additions to knowledge are still possible and necessary in the search for a fully comprehensive understanding. This literature review has shown the strategic importance to the UK of sustaining and developing international competitiveness through policies at the micro (university) and macro (UK economy) level.

For Nepal there are continuing issues illustrating the effects of conflict on education and how the lack of employment opportunities can lead to migration of Nepalese graduates and workers. Migration from Nepal was seen to have both economic advantages but longer-term disadvantages to the country. From a Nepalese GDP point of view continued migration may lead to a positive economic result for Nepal, achieved through remittances

from all groups including graduates who stay working overseas. This may be a successful strategy for Nepal if workers, including graduates, at some point return home with new skills which can 'enrich Nepal's human resource pool.

Chapter two together with this review of the literature demonstrate how UK universities have benefited from the special relationship that developed between Nepalese private secondary schools and UK universities, whilst recruitment to UK universities is welcomed by these schools, their closure, as demanded of the Maoists ahead of the ten-year civil war, shows no sign of being implemented.

Very few examples of the experience of international employers, outside the EU, have been found. This thesis will enable the views of Nepalese employers to be set alongside those of their UK educated Nepalese business graduate employees. There is an opportunity in undertaking this research of benefitting from the experience of returning Nepalese business graduates in developing Business Studies courses more particularly suited to meeting their employment needs which would most likely be equally cogent in terms of serving and attracting other Asian candidates.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the research process and methods for understanding through the research questions whether the influences on the educational decision-making of Nepalese UK educated graduates and their expectations for employment were being fully realised. The overall objective is to produce, “a faithful account of the phenomenon being studied” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 584) which is the “returned home” Nepalese graduate from a UK Business Studies course. The research process adopted has been structured around the five-phase process developed by Denzin and Lincoln (2011 p. 12).

My role in the research is to, “understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants” (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 19). The participants in my research will be UK educated Nepalese business studies graduates who have returned home, their employers and education consultancies. In writing this chapter, I use selectively, the first person where transparency and reflection in my thought processes are considered helpful in contributing to the credibility of my study

The chapter is organised into five sections. In section one, I introduce myself as the researcher followed by an introduction to the research and summary of preparations made to conduct the research in Nepal. The ethical issues that were addressed in undertaking the research in Nepal are also considered. The personal information I provide in this section adds to ‘My Personal Journey’ in Chapter seven.

Section two discusses alternative research methodologies leading to the reasons why a qualitative, interpretivist paradigm method is used for this thesis. Details of the moderately structured depth interview method used for collecting data are then given.

Section three explains approaches to the collection and analysis of data including details of the pilot and context interviews, sampling, selection and participant response rates, access to participants and the sequencing of interviews. All interview data are anonymised, including online questionnaires sent to the Trompenaars Organisation. This section concludes with details of how the data was organised including collection, recording and transcription. An explanation is given on the use of NVivo for coding and the development of themes and associate themes.

With reference to previous models on decision-making in educational research, section four assesses the conceptual framework I use in the analysis and understanding of the data and an assessment of the validity, reliability and limitations of the research (discussed further in Chapter seven). The final section five of this chapter reflects comments on my role as a researcher including a discussion around insider/outside and reflexivity and includes references to transparency of data collection and analysis before the chapter conclusion.

4.2 Section One

4.2.1 My role as the researcher

In my role teaching and working with international business students, I became aware of two issues that were causing some concern. The first related to the increasing competitive activity from universities in English speaking countries other than the UK to attract students. One of the main reasons for this was due to changes in UK visa regulations with respect to post-study work experience, outlined in Chapter two and the well-publicised closures (Pie News, 2017) of 400 UK private colleges. My second concern was that I was not fully aware as to why international students chose the UK for their higher education studies. There was also the issue of whether graduates and employers were entirely satisfied, from an employment perspective, with the delivery of UK Business Studies courses. I came to question whether change(s) to Business Studies courses were needed that might better suit the needs of Nepalese graduates as unemployment remained high and the economy remained dependent on remittances from Nepalese migrant workers (as outlined in Chapter two).

My position as a business lecturer and researcher included working in India and Pakistan which gave me some personal insight into the cultural backgrounds of South Asian students. I was always conscious that, to be more effective in influencing policy and delivering a better outcome for graduates from a UK university business programme, I would benefit from gaining either an EdD or PhD. I chose an EdD because I wanted to focus my thesis on the implications of change(s) recommended for professional practice in business higher education. The recommendations for professional practice are given in Chapter seven.

After leaving industry and joining a university in 1990, I progressed through the MPhil stage of a PhD researching the impact of family firms in the UK furniture industry. For me, the significance of longevity seen in family businesses, had many parallels and synergies for towards understanding the influence of family within the cultures of South Asian countries. Family, identified as a meso system in the ecological model developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), led me to consider how useful this model might be to the research. Linking the “relationship between a developing person and the immediate environment, such as school or family” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 1) in the model, offered real possibilities for the development of a conceptual framework.

I commenced my career in industry as a qualitative researcher with an organisation that has now become one of the leading market research agencies in the world. Working with Psychologists gave me considerable experience of using alternative research methods such as focus groups, interviews and observation, whilst, “recognising that there is no ‘perfect’ model of research design” (Silverman, 2010, p. 40). However, the one approach that I found most insightful in understanding why decisions are made, came from using in-depth interviewing with question areas developed from pilot or focus groups Hennink, M. et al. (2011) together with individual interviews with, “experts in their areas of expertise” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 303). In undertaking the interviews with participants for this thesis, my involvement in teaching and working alongside international students has given me some insight into how business studies could be developed but always with an appreciation that suggestions for improvements to Business Studies courses need to be implemented with minimum disruption. I also concluded that there was still room to develop further the understanding of educational decision-making.

4.2.2 Research in Nepal

Before the visit to Nepal, emails were exchanged with the British Council in Kathmandu giving details of the proposed research. The British Council welcomed this study and regarded the research as a possible way of strengthening the appeal of UK universities to students in Nepal at a time when they were forecasting a growth in outward bound student numbers from Nepal (British Council, 2012).

In a preliminary meeting with the British Council in Nepal I was made aware of the increasing competition from countries, other than the UK, for Nepalese students. The British Council also advised that more students from both Nepalese state and private secondary schools were now increasingly likely to go to Australia or the US to pursue higher education. The possible reduction in the number of Nepalese students going to the UK was attributed to the loss of work experience opportunities, as seen in Chapter two, to the cancellation of the UK's two-year post-study work visa. The British Council also advised that there was already an increasing number of Nepalese secondary school students with the appropriate qualifications for entry into three-year UK university undergraduate (business) courses.

4.2.3 Ethical issues

Prior to this study commencing, Nepal experienced considerable political unrest with, “schools severely affected by the conflict targeted at both teachers and students” (Shields, 2013, p. 58). Continuing unrest caused uncertainty as to whether it would be possible for a UK researcher to interview participants in Nepal and whether ethical approval given by a UK university would be acceptable to the Nepalese authorities.

I was asked by Anglia Ruskin to enquire into any ethical procedures and processes for a ‘foreigner’ wishing to undertake doctoral research in Nepal and these enquiries were made to the British Council in Kathmandu, Nepal. Written assurance was given by the British Council and permission to proceed was granted by Anglia Ruskin University’s ethics committee. There were no adverse recommendations for travelling to Nepal from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Before undertaking the research in Nepal, I was successful in recruiting sufficient participants to interview whilst in the UK (see access to participants, 4.4.2) from the UK which ensured that the intended number of interviews with all participant groups in Nepal would be achieved. I agreed with my supervisor that interviewing 20 students should enable me to reach “saturation” (Silverman, 2010, p. 236) in the information I was being given, but if needed to add new information from interviews, I confirmed through the British Council that they would offer help in finding additional participants. I could also have sought the help of the graduates and education consultancies I was planning to interview in Nepal.

Having explained in the submission for ethical approval the purpose of the research including methods of data collection and potential benefits to future students who chose to study in the UK, I asked participants by means of a consent form for their written permission to participate in the research. I ensured that participants were aware of their right to voluntarily withdraw from the research at any time. The consent form also gave an assurance that confidentiality of interview data was a condition of the successful ethics submission. Appendix 5 gives details of my submission to Anglia Ruskin University’s ethics committee. Appendix 6 contains an example of an ‘Invitation Letter’

giving ‘further information on the research and Appendix 7 contains an example of the Consent Form all participants signed prior to interviews being undertaken.

4.3 Section Two

A mixed methods study, using qualitative and quantitative methodologies was used. This has enabled more comprehensive evidence to be taken into account than using either quantitative or qualitative research. The analysis provided the opportunity to triangulate results with reference to:

- (i) the development of themes using Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) from analysis of the qualitative in-depth interviews with graduates
- (ii) the relationships and interconnections to the ‘five systems model’ developed by Bronfenbrenner
- (iii) the use of Intercultural Awareness Profiling (IAP).

The “corroborating evidence” (Creswell, 2013, p.251) using this triangulation has allowed more accurate representation of participant views. Consideration of different perspectives and analytical approaches has given validity to the discussion and conclusions in chapters five and six respectively.

4.3.1 Mixed methods

My study contains elements that Morse and Nieuhaus (2009) refer to as a mixed methods approach in that it includes a pilot interview in London, focus groups, moderately structured in-depth interviews in Nepal and the completion of an online questionnaire by Nepalese graduates. A key aim of the research is to assess the effectiveness for employment of Business Studies courses hence I considered it important to include,

when possible, the views of graduate employers and of the education consultancies used by those graduates. Priority was given to using primary sources, including citations, for the analysis and discussion and I believe the methods used were, “appropriate to what I was trying to find out” (Punch, 1998, p. 244).

My thesis includes data from a pilot interview in London and what I refer to as ‘context interviews’ undertaken in Nepal before what I term the ‘main interviews’ were conducted. The main interviews took place in face-to-face settings with all participants and, for graduates only, were followed by completion of an online cultural profiling questionnaire. These questionnaires provided through Woolliams (2015) of the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Organisation were completed in the graduates’ own time with analysis and feedback provided by the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Organisation.. Copies of the results from the questionnaires, including the feedback given to graduates was sent to myself, by the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Organisation, following my return to the UK.

4.3.2 Incorporating qualitative research

As a researcher, my starting point was to seek ways of further interpreting and understanding the cumulative influences on Nepalese graduates who choose to enrol on business studies courses in the UK and then return home. The ontological philosophical assumptions of this thesis are that, “reality is multiple as seen through many views” and the implications for practice are, “that the researcher reports different perspectives as themes develop in the findings” (Creswell, 2013, p. 21). Individuals develop, “subjective meanings of their experiences” (Creswell 2013, p. 24); in this thesis a subjective meaning refers to the experiences of UK Business Studies by graduate participants who

choose the UK for higher education. A benefit in using responses from graduates, employers and education consultancies is that it allows the reader to see how “individuals participating in my research view their experiences differently” (Moustakas, 1994, in Creswell, 2013, p. 20).

A fundamental issue in qualitative research rests on an understanding of information that would serve as a foundation for “evidence” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 586). Denzin and Lincoln use the term, “analytic realism”, to explain the view that the social world is an interpreted world, not a literal world (2011, p. 586). My belief is that the purposive sampling method used, (explained in section 4.4.1) resulted in the correct number of interviews required to mitigate against the possibility of insufficient quotes being available for use as ‘evidence’ and ensure that further interviews would not yield new data.

My thesis involved interviewing Nepalese graduates, their employers and education consultancies, adding to the view that, “the more information of different sorts I have from as many sources that I can engage with, the greater are the chances that our eventual understanding will be robust” (Wengraf, 2012, p. 104). Silverman (2010) in explaining the appropriate positioning for qualitative research used an analogy of people in poverty to explain where the use of a mixed methods approach might aid the interpretation of data. He used the argument that, “it was a matter not simply of determining how many ... but what it was like (to be in poverty)” (Silverman, 2010, p. 8). Hammersley (1992) suggested that we are often faced with a range of precise and imprecise data and stressed the importance of accurate reporting. I used a count of meanings seen in interview

transcripts to explore and attribute evidence from participant statements to codes and themes.

4.3.2.1 Using moderately-structured depth interviews

The method I used for eliciting information follows the format of a, “moderately structured interview” (Wengraf, 2012, p. 152). I introduced myself to participants as an education researcher seeking to help UK universities develop their business programmes. I tried to follow the principles of active listening which encourages the participant to “go on speaking because they feel listened to” (Wengraf, 2012, p. 129).

4.3.3 Incorporating quantitative research

The research for this thesis differs from other UK higher education surveys in that it is conducted amongst ‘returned home’ graduated students and includes perspectives from other participant groups covering areas such as meeting employment expectations. Whilst UK quantitative surveys yield useful and statistically accurate results about overall student satisfaction, they are not representative of the total experience. The NSS survey, for example, was not designed to be representative of the views of employers, the environmental context or stage of economic development of countries sending international students to the UK. It makes no account of the expectations graduates hold of UK Business Studies education, neither do these quantitative surveys qualify whether the experience of a business studies education in the UK meets a graduate’s expectations for employment.

The limited information available on whether UK business studies education meets the expectations of graduates has led to a gap in knowledge on the total experience, and not

just satisfaction, of Nepalese and other international students graduating from a Business Studies course in a UK university. Intercultural profiling of Nepalese graduates, using Intercultural Awareness Profiling (IAP) questionnaires from the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Organisation, were used to evaluate the work and communication methods of Nepalese graduates.

IAP was designed to increase understanding of cultural paradigms and values, misunderstandings, and individual communication styles. Use of IAP enabled graduates to receive feedback on a range of dimensions around cultural competences. Cultural competence in the employment situations of the Nepalese graduates interviewed is explained by Cross et al. (1989) as a set of congruent behaviours that come together in a system among professionals and enables them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. Intercultural communication has been defined as, “communication that takes place between people from different cultures” (Ting-Toomey, 2005, p. 39).

The feedback from analysis of IAP questionnaires to graduates raises issues around awareness for personal development and suggested ways of responding to different cultural behavior. I concluded that only a qualitative methodology using a mixed methods research design centered on the ‘why’ in contrast to the ‘how many’ would yield appropriate answers to the research questions.

4.4 Section Three

Section three details the sampling strategy, selection and response rate to invitations to take part in my research and methods used to gain access to participants. An explanation is given on the interpretation of results from the pilot interview, group discussion and individual context interviews. The section concludes with details of how the data was

organised, including data collection, recording and transcribing of interview data. In the analysis and interpretation of data there are examples of the use of NVivo which was used for coding, exploring and testing data in the development of the themes and associate themes.

4.4.1 Access to participants

I considered carefully issues of sample size with the objective of developing, “well saturated” (Creswell, op. cit. p.157) information. I followed the recommendation of Creswell (op. cit. p.157) that the sample size selected should be the, “point in data collection when the researcher gathers data from several participants and the collection of data from new participants does not add substantially to the codes or themes being developed”. This was achieved by checking after each interview against notes made by myself from previous participant interviews. After 23 interviews had been completed no new information was forthcoming from interviewees. I therefore judged the saturation point had been reached.

I created a purpose designed Facebook page Nepalese graduates who met the selection criteria. I contacted UK university alumni associations and the international offices of UK universities. I also sought the help of the Nepalese British Alumni Association. I received 43 acceptances from invitations to take part in my research. Given the number of acceptances, I introduced a further qualification that there should be no more than two graduates from the same university. My final selection included graduates from as many different UK universities as possible. Table 5 (page 105) gives details of the final sample selected. The findings, in the Associate Theme of Networking (section 5.5.3.3),

show how the well-developed connections in Nepalese society worked to my advantage in the final sample selection.

At the commencement of each interview it was made clear to each participant that they could withdraw at any stage of the interview. However, there were no refusals to take part in the research and no withdrawals before, during or subsequent to the interviews being undertaken.

4.4.2 Sampling strategy

The sampled population included male and female graduates from undergraduates and postgraduates who had completed business courses from a range of pre- and post-1992 UK universities. All interviews were undertaken in Nepal. All graduate participants had returned home to Nepal within three years of their graduation. The research that was undertaken complied with Nepalese ethics procedures for educational research, as the UK's University ethics approval process was confirmed by The British Council in Kathmandu as apposite for Nepal.

From the outset of my research I was concerned that accessing and recruiting participants might be problematic given that I had no previous contacts in Nepal with Nepalese alumni or employer organisations. Purposive sampling was used to meet the selection criteria and was supported with additional participants recruited by "snowball sampling" (Noy, 2008). Patton (1990, p.169) described the usefulness of purposive sampling for focusing in depth on, "understanding the needs, interests and incentives of a small sample of a carefully selected [population]". Hood (2007) added that purposive sampling sets criteria for representation, with Creswell (2013, p.156) adding that

individuals selected should be, “able to purposely inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study”.

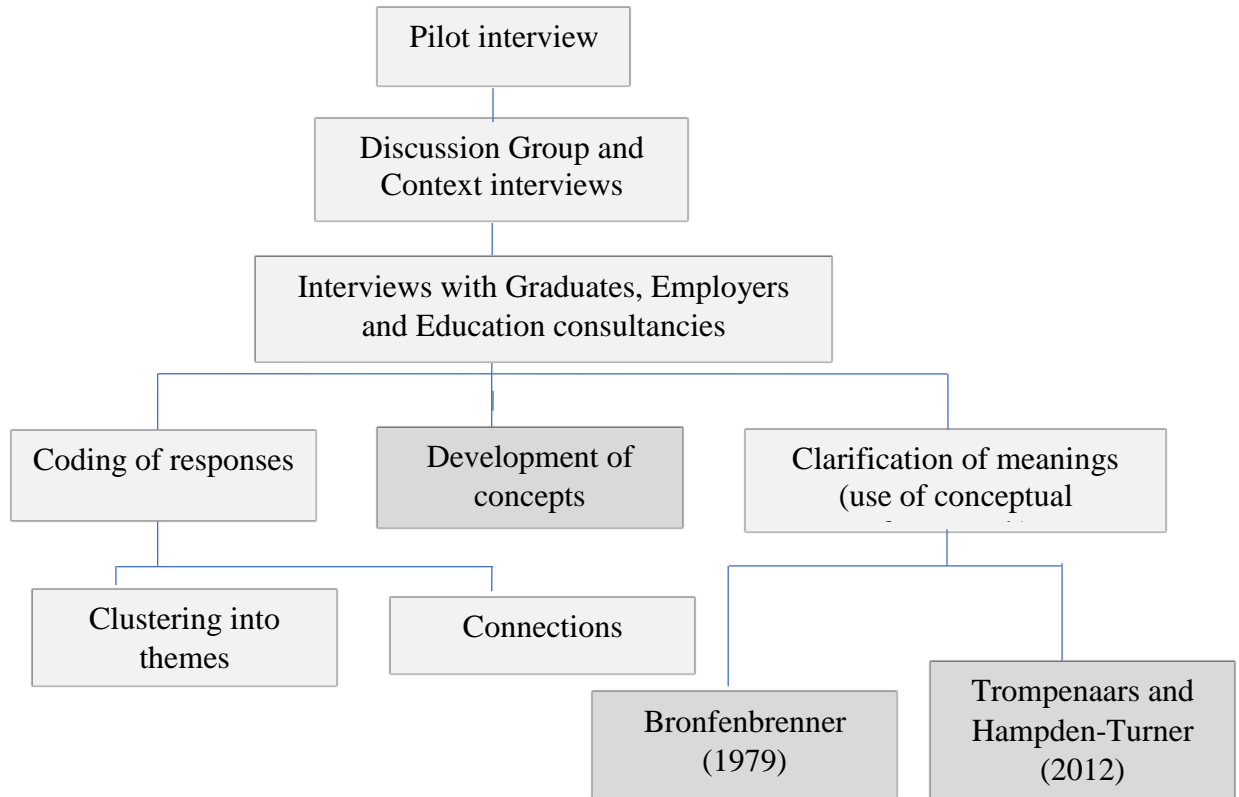
Initially, interviews were arranged with nineteen graduates. After interviews were completed I asked for and was given contact information of several more Nepalese graduates. This led to four further interviews.

4.4.3 Sequencing, transcribing and English language skills of participants

Figure 6 illustrates the sequencing and transcribing of interviews. A pilot interview in London was followed up with a discussion group and three individual interviews to help with context before the main interviews were held.

Although Nepali was the mother tongue of those interviewed, all interviews were successfully conducted in English. Graduates had met their respective university English language requirements for admissions and all but one employer had been educated in the UK or USA. The exception was an employer in the food industry who had qualified with a degree in food science in Nepal. Three of the four educational consultants interviewed were educated in Nepal and were now working closely with UK, USA and Australian universities and had travelled overseas to their respective clients. Verbatim citations in Chapter five testify to the English language ability of the interviewees.

Figure 6: Sequencing of interviews and transcription process



Interviews with graduates and employers were normally undertaken towards the end of the working day, each interview lasting for between one and one and a half hours in duration. All interviews were digitally recorded and draft transcripts made in the morning following the interviews. The schedule of interviews is shown in Appendix 8.

4.4.4 Pilot interview

Section one sets out why ‘context’ is important in qualitative research of this thesis and underpins my decision to undertake a pilot interview before the main depth interviews in Nepal. Hence, one interview was held in with an Asian graduate, previously unknown to myself. The graduate was introduced by a partner post-1992 university and had complete a master’s degree in finance from a pre-1992 university and an undergraduate Business Studies degree at a post-1992 university.

It was recorded and transcribed and, although the participant had given written permission to be interviewed his opinions are not included in my data. I was immediately made aware early in the interview of the deeply rooted cultural, particularly familial influences in Hindu society. The transcript describes the significance to a Hindu family, and extended family, of all facets of the educational decision-making process. The interview took on the form of a story-telling of his life history including how his decision to come to the UK had been influenced by family policy, availability of scholarships and the personal status and respect accorded in his home society to graduates from a UK university.

With respect to story-telling and life history, story-telling is an age-old tradition across communities. McKeough et al. (2008) noted that stories form a major part of the social and cultural community, facilitating the passing of information from one generation to the next. Miller noted that in life history, “rather than limiting itself to the slice of an individual’s situation located at the present, the focus of interest is upon peoples’ complete lives.” Miller’s work demonstrated that, “lives are lived within social networks from early socialisation on. People grow up in families, move into and through educational systems ...and the importance of family can be central to understanding individuals” (Miller, 2000, p. 2). In addition, “historical events at the societal level impinge upon the individual’s own unique life history”, (Miller, 2000, p. 8).

The pilot interview enabled me, as the sole researcher to:

- (i) Refine the interview structure and draft questions
- (ii) Assess the viability of interviewing in a hotel. Confirmation of the suitability of this type of location for listening and audio recording information was

important, given that I would be interviewing male and female participants previously unknown to me

- (iii) Confirm that, although his written consent had been given for the interview, he was still comfortable with the decision to process
- (iv) Finalise the details, timing and progression of the actual interview process, especially with regard to active listening skills by reflecting on the needed for any modifications to question areas or question emphasis

4.4.5 Context interviews

Following the pilot interview in London, at my request, the British Council in Kathmandu, Nepal arranged a meeting with the President of The British Alumni Association of Nepal. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce myself and the research I was undertaking and receive any advice he felt would be useful to me when conducting interviews with graduates. I also thought he might be able to identify additional interviewees should this become necessary. It transpired that many of the association's members hold senior positions in the educational, engineering, government administrative, legal or medical sectors. Most had received Nepalese or overseas government scholarships to attend universities in Russia, the UK or USA. The President arranged the group discussion and the three individual interviews context interviews with myself. Hence, through the British Council and the President of the British Alumni Association of Nepal these individual context interviews and the group discussion enabled me to gather more background information on the educational system in Nepal and likely cultural influences on decision-making that I might experience later in the main interviews.

4.4.5.1 Context group discussion

The group discussion and interviews were held in Kathmandu at my hotel one week before the commencement of the main interviews. The discussion group comprised six members, three male and three females, from the fields of banking, consultancy, education, government administration, medicine and tourism. In a free flowing, lightly structured discussion I was given useful knowledge on current issues that a graduate was likely to raise in their interview. The discussion ranged widely over how the ongoing political situation in Nepal was affecting business and education, how their own expectations of an overseas education might differ from those of new graduates and how ‘the family’ was still the main driving factor in decision-making.

During the group discussion, I concluded that there were many issues that needed further clarification. I accepted the advice from the group that I should undertake a series of, what I refer to as ‘context interviews’ to understand more of the background to education in Nepal and how more knowledge around the historical legacy of the Rana regime (outlined in Chapter two) and Hindu culture might influence answers from the forthcoming interviews with graduates.

The discussion group was useful for comparing the members’, many of whom were also employers, experiences of overseas education to the views of recently ‘returned home’ UK educated Nepalese business graduates, although no member of the group employed any of the graduates subsequently interviewed. It also prompted me to reflect on Miller’s (2000) work on life stories and family histories previously referenced with regards to the pilot interview.

4.4.5.2 Individual context interviews

Three separate context interviews, each lasting approximately one hour, were held. The first was with an academic from the group discussion, the second with a senior manager from the manufacturing sector and the third interviewee was with a manager from the tourism industry. All interviewees had received higher education overseas in either the US, UK or Russia.

The interviews included questions, that had been modified and added to after the group discussion. The questioned were focused around:

- Their own experience of overseas education
- Historical legacy
- Family influences in educational decision-making
- The organisation of businesses in Nepal
- Political uncertainty (strongly advised as a key topic in the group discussion)
- Perceptions of changing cultural attitudes in the younger generation

Many of the issues raised in both the group discussion and individual ‘context interviews’ permeate throughout the findings and discussion of the data.

4.4.6 Graduate interviews: Sample selection

A stratified purposive sample (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 28) of fifteen male and eight female business undergraduates and postgraduates from nine pre- and seven post-1992 UK universities was selected for interview, a detailed composition of graduates interviewed is shown in Table 5. (See also 4.4.1, p. 97-98) ‘Access to and/Sampling).

It can be seen from the findings in Chapter five that the data generated from the interviews was varied in breadth and depth and met my objectives of gaining a greater

understanding of the influences on educational decision-making of graduates and their reflections on UK business studies. I fully appreciated that generalisation would not be possible from the small sample size.

Table 5: Details of Universities and Business Studies graduates interviewed

Graduates	No of universities	Male UG	Male PG	Female UG	Female PG	Total
Pre-1992 universities	9	1	5	1	4	11
Post- 1992 universities (7)	7	3	5	2	2	12
Total	16	4	10	3	6	23

Male UG = Male Undergraduate. Male PG = Male Postgraduate.

Female UG = Female Undergraduate. Female PG = Female Postgraduate.

Source: Graduate participants interviewed

4.4.7 Employer interviews

Seven employers from banking, business consultancy, communications, education, manufacturing, retail and tourism sectors who employed eleven of the twenty-three graduates were interviewed. Due to employer commitments, it was not possible within the time allocated to arrange more interviews with graduate employers. Employers were generally identified by the participating graduates and therefore I had no influence on the types of businesses they represented. In the event the final mix represented many sectors of the Nepalese economy. Interviews with the graduates always preceded the interview with their employer, but no employer was asked questions concerning their employee(s).

4.4.8 Education consultancy interviews

Only two education consultancies were used by the Nepalese graduates interviewed and two consultants from each consultancy were interviewed on their business premises. These consultancies are recognised by The British Council in Nepal and both recruit students to universities in the UK, the US and Australia. Education consultancies play an important role with the British Council in promoting English Language qualifications. I chose to use the term ‘Education Consultancies in preference to ‘agents’ to recognise their position in Hindu society.

It will be seen in the findings and discussion that education consultancies enjoy a special, and social relationship with the parents and families of students planning to study overseas. The consultants in the two education consultancies interviewed referred to long standing agency/principal relationships with their UK University clients. Education consultancies were seen as a valuable source of information on country selection, universities and courses as well as providing services such as help with visas, travel documentation and currency transfers (See also 5.6.2.2.1, p.188).

4.4.9 Question structure and content

Subsequent to asking the opening question, I tried to limit any further input to one of asking supplementary questions such as: ‘Can you explain that further?’ or ‘Do you remember anything else?’ as follow ups to further individual questions. I used as many open-ended questions as possible except for some information questions which were closed such as school attended, or course studied in the UK. I kept to hand throughout the interviewing process the key principles of Kvale’s ‘Inter-Views’ process typography, specifically introducing, following up and probing together with,

interpretation to make sure I understood the point the interviewee was making (1996, p. 133). The work of Kvale provides researchers with practical guidelines for conducting research interviews and suggests conceptual frames of reference for interview research.

Keeping to the sequence of questions planned for my interviews was not always easy. Employers were often seeking my advice on the best courses or best universities in the UK or asking for my views on UK Government policy whilst graduates were interested in my career pathway. This highlighted the point made by Massarik that, “In the depth interview, interviewer and interviewee, in substantial balance meet as peers, their humanities expressed in circumscribed terms but with continuing emphasis on the specific goals of response content” (1981, p. 205).

All interviews commenced with a restatement of the aims of the research and confirmation that the participant could voluntarily withdraw from the interview at any time. Analysis of the context interviews highlighted answers to questions which I felt needed more development so prompts were developed from this and are shown on the Interview Guide Sheet.

An example of the use of prompting is shown below:

Myself (Researcher)	Respondent	Notes/Prompts
I’m talking to Miss A	Oh, you’re very good at pronouncing my name. Most of the British people when they see my name find it hard to pronounce. But it’s easy, isn’t it?	Putting the graduate at ease
“Where do your parents live?”	In Kathmandu? I was born in Kathmandu	
“Have your family always lived in Kathmandu?”	No, my father is from a different place. Out of this (Kathmandu) valley and he came here.	Prompt: Probe history
What was he doing before he came here?”	He was working in different offices, trying different things.	

Oh, in offices?	He ended up coming into Kathmandu Valley and he learned about the clothes business. He got into clothes business.	Sounding surprised)
And is he still in that business?	Yes. He's still in that business. It's been like 30 or 40 years.	Prompt: Explore motive
Any reason why he chose the clothes business?	Yes, trying to find the best way of sustaining life t gave him money to get the family started	Transcript notes: Importance of family business, geographical implications. Track careers of graduate, family connections

Source: Interview transcript: FG 02.

The questions for each group were designed to include:

For Graduates:

- Family or business background
- Educational details (of graduates)
- Expectations and reflections on overseas studying
- About the business course studied
- Issues around employability and employment
 - Family businesses (*Prompt from context interviews*)
- Processes and influences leading to decisions about studying overseas/employment of overseas educated graduate
 - Political uncertainties (*Prompt from context interviews*)
- Understanding culture and caste in decision-making
- Brands and comparative reputations of UK/Nepalese education
- Role of agents, family, employers in education decisions
- The decision to return home after graduation. (*Prompt from context interviews*)
- Impact of UK Government visa policy (*Prompt from context interviews*)
- Summarising to check understanding (as required)
- Introduction to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner IAP questionnaire

For employers:

- Business sector: organisation background, size, number of employees
- Position in organisation of participant
- Issues around the employment of graduates (home and overseas educated)
 - Preferences and why
 - In what way preferred
 - Discuss UK educated graduates
- Graduate discipline. Any preferences
- What do you look for when interviewing/selecting a graduate?
- How selection of graduates is made
- How important is networking in selection? (*Prompted by context interviews*)
- Views on the appropriateness of curriculum studied for employment

- Graduate attributes expected
- Specific skills sought (*Prompted by context interviews*)
- Graduates attributes not seen in UK graduates
- Issues around qualifications (*Prompted by context interviews*)
 - Comparability and level. Professional qualifications vs degrees
 - US gpa systems (*Prompted by context interviews*)
- Views on ranking systems. Use in selection of graduates.
 - Usefulness and importance. The UK system
- Are overseas educated graduates expecting more? In what way?
- Type/position of job offered to a graduate. Any differences between overseas and home graduates, jobs, position, conditions, training (*Prompted by context interviews*)
- The employment situation in Nepal (*Prompted by context interviews*)
 - Any specific requirements.
- Summarising to check understanding (as required)

For Education Consultants:

- Background to their organisation. Size. Sector.
- Preference for particular countries and/or universities?
- Details about their role as an agent? (with students, parents, universities)
- Why do students choose to study overseas?
- How they select countries, courses, universities?
- How important are rankings?
- Why so many qualified graduates stay overseas?
- Information about their links with and the role of the British Council in Nepal?
- Summarising to check understanding (as required)

Appendix 9 provides more information on the questions asked to each participant group and includes the ‘Interview Guide Sheet’.

4.4.10 Organising the data

This section provides details of data collection, recording and transcribing of data, data analysis and the use of NVivo as an introduction to code and develop the initial themes and the final list of five themes and their associate themes.

4.4.10.1 Data collection

During the main interviews, I used ‘prompts’ made on the Interview Guide Sheet to help in the further development of question areas and discover emerging themes. Examples of issues that arose in the context interviews which were given more weight by participants than I originally expected were, the depth of concern over political uncertainty that was affecting employment prospects and anxieties over how to implement change in traditional Nepalese society.

All graduate interviews, except for one, were conducted in my hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Both were centrally located to the commercial centres, well known and offered excellent (and quiet) areas. Given the time taken to complete an IAP questionnaire it was not possible for questionnaires to be completed at the same time. All graduates completed and uploaded the IAP questionnaires directly to the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner computer centre within two days of their first interview. Results were analysed in ‘real time’ and returned to graduates from the THT Computer Centre in the Netherlands. An anonymised copy of the feedback to graduates was sent to myself on my return to the UK.

4.4.10.2 Recording of data

Interviews were recorded using a digital recording device. For security, tapes were transferred to MP3 files and held on my password protected PC. There were no technical problems encountered whilst recording the interviews. A copy of all transcripts was uploaded onto a memory stick and deposited in the hotel safe at night.

4.4.10.3 Transcribing data

The decision to listen to all interviews during the transcribing process enabled a greater understanding of issues that might arise in subsequent interviews. Notations to transcripts (such as pauses) were in accordance with conventions. Final transcripts were produced, by myself, within three weeks of returning to the UK. Transcriptions of all interviews undertaken by the myself are held on a password protected computer in my private office. There has been no transmission of transcripts via the internet.

4.4.10.4 Data analysis

I have explained in chapters two and three why looking through a conceptual lens based on the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and work on culture by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) provides a conceptual framework for the analysis. To give more understanding and to help with interpretation of data, I used thematic content analysis (TCA) which was facilitated by the use of NVivo, a qualitative, analytical tool.

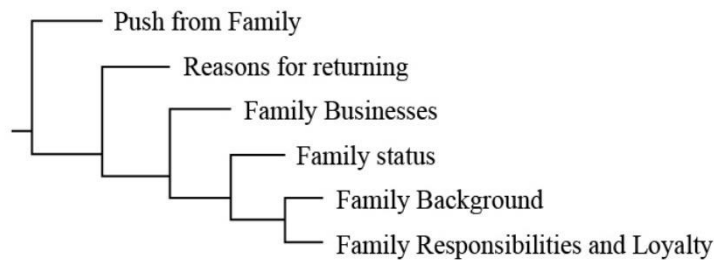
4.4.10.5 Coding data to identify themes and associate themes

By analysing the transcripts from all participants at the commencement of the coding process, 583 individual nodes (citations) were identified. These preliminary nodes and factors in theme development are shown in Appendix 10. Individual answers to questions from graduates were then entered in Excel spreadsheets, facilitating the counting and percentages for comparisons between individual citations. The 583 nodes were then summarised into 247 statements which were then further reduced in the process of developing a preliminary list of 26 themes as shown in Appendix 11. Further analysis of transcripts enabled the reclassification of some of the 26 preliminary themes

which then reduced the total number of main themes to 8 shown in Appendix 12. Using the nodes developed from NVivo and citations in Excel, this final list of themes was checked for appropriateness against data for each participant group. This process of reduction enabled associate themes to be ‘refined further’. The final list of five main themes and their associate themes are shown in Table 6. Figure 7 illustrates the use of NVivo word frequency and similarity analysis in theme development.

Figure 7: Using word frequency and similarity analysis

Nodes clustered by word similarity



Source: Citations from graduate interviews.

A further example of the use of NVivo towards the development of theme 4 (Intrinsic influences) and the associate theme of Culture and Caste is given in Appendix 13.

Table 6: Final and associate themes

	Themes (bracketed numbers refer to the earlier 8 themes)	Final five Themes	Associate Themes
1	Family (1)	Family	Educational decisions Security Connections to the UK Finance Loyalty. influence and independence
2	Curriculum and Employment (2) Private secondary schools in Nepal English language skills State schools in Nepal Perceived poor quality of Nepalese universities Limited course choice (5)	UK and Nepalese Curriculum and Employment	Training and graduate skills Reputation Teaching culture and methods Work experience. Internships and employment skills
3	Expectations (fulfilled and unfulfilled) Unrealised expectations and frustrations Political uncertainty (3)	Expectations	Frustration Political uncertainty New experiences and independence Employment
4	Influence of cultural and caste traditions Ghurka influences (4)	Intrinsic Influences	Family authority Culture and caste Networking and status
5	UK visa policy Post-study work visa (6) Influence of educational consultancies/agents The British Council (7)	Extrinsic Influences	UK Government policy Advisory services
	Returning home Build/rebuild country (8)	Not included	

Source: Participant Interview data

4.5 Section Four

4.5.1 Conceptual framework

The literature review in Chapter three introduces several of the educational decision-making models that I considered using before the final selection of a conceptual framework based on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Trompenaars and

Hampden-Turner (2012). I initially concluded that the theoretical integrated model of educational choice developed by Hemsley-Brown and Foskett (2001) was potentially the most useful as, unlike other models, it allowed for two-way interactions between elements rather than interpretations limited to one of the choice influencers (previously shown in Figure 5 on page 66).

However, on closer inspection, I discovered that Hemsley-Brown and Foskett's (2001) theoretical framework did not fully reflect the possibility of influences and networking on the decision-making process of students, students as graduates, or employers. It also did not adequately compensate for variables such as the longevity of political uncertainty in Nepal and whilst acknowledging the economy, did not contain any specific reference to changes in a nation's development that could influence decision-making. Neither did it account for post experience reflections on decision-making. The conceptual framework finally adopted for my analysis emphasises the importance of understanding the interlinked connections between individuals' development and surrounding environmental contexts.

Using the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), I analysed the findings inductively then, using the process of deduction in the discussion (Chapter five), I reviewed, "the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of research, then is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation" (Creswell, 2013, p. 24). These enabled patterns of meaning to be generated as seen in the themes and associate themes.

4.5.1.1 Bronfenbrenner (1979)

The original model introduced by Bronfenbrenner in 1979 comprised four systems which he termed microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. A fifth system -the chronosystem was added later and represents identifiable periods of (historical) time.

The use of Bronfenbrenner's work has enabled me through, for example, the microsystem to analyse the two-way interaction of family or peers which has been shown in the research to have a key influence in career development decisions. Similarly, the mesosystem refers to interactions between elements of a person's micro systems and analysis has shown both the positive and negative aspects of these interactions in decision-making. The exosystem refers to influences on an individual's development but where they have no direct participation in the process. Political uncertainty has been coded as a chronosystem in Bronfenbrenner's model.

4.5.1.2 Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993, 1997, 2012)

This study has drawn together the views and opinions of graduate participants primarily using the idiographic approach following the work of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012 p. 21) in their research on the seven dimensions of culture. The graduates in this thesis were all employed or self-employed, therefore the work of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner on management was important given that an aim of this thesis was to identify how the employment prospects of Nepalese 'returned home' graduates could be improved.

Based on the work of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012, p. 37) identified five areas of culture entitled: our relationship to others,

time, activity, person-nature and the character of innate human nature. My decision to incorporate Trompenaars and Hampden Turner's IAP questionnaires into the research was reinforced by acceptance of the view of Schein (2006) that culture is the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas and is not simply another variable to be added to studies (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p. 8.).

Meaningful communication, which links to the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), "presupposes common ways of processing information among the people interacting" (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p. 27). The value of using both models for the analysis comes from, "the mutual dependence of the actors due to the fact that together they constitute a connected system of meanings: a shared definition of a situation by a group. An absolute condition for meaningful interaction in business and management is the existence of mutual expectations" (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p. 27).

Use of the IAP questionnaires enabled the identification of cultural differences in individuals that were seen to have given rise to the frustration experienced by graduates and their employers.

4.5.2 Validity and reliability

Silverman, (2010, p. 36) introduced the issue of how to confirm whether studies say, "anything interesting about the phenomenon" when discussing issues of validity as, "another word for truth" (op. cit., p. 275). Creswell (2013) compiled a list of perspectives and terms used by eight qualitative researchers when discussing issues of 'truth or validity'. Creswell (op.cit.) makes no reference to the word 'validity' preferring, instead

to use ‘validation’ in his assessment of qualitative research. In this thesis I have chosen ‘validity’ a term more commonly associated with research including Denzin and Lincoln’s (2011) who refer to validity as “authenticity” (p. 121).

Reliability, as argued by both Creswell (2013) and Silverman (2010), refers to research being high in qualitative data always containing the question of the researcher’s own interpretation. Hence, it is important that transcripts are available and conventions followed, for, “strengthening the reliability of field data” (Silverman, 2010, p. 287): this refers to use of focus groups, pilot studies, efficient recording and accurate transcription of data. Silverman (2010, p. 201) also values the use of multiple methods for “broader comparisons”. In my research ‘broader comparisons are found in the perspectives of the three participant groups.

4.5.2.1 Validity

The purposive sampling methods met with ethical approval from Anglia Ruskin University. When considering the issue of the validity of my work, the findings in Chapter five are based on interviews and verbatim citations from twenty-three graduates, seven employers and four educational consultants. The findings are therefore based, “on critical investigation of all of the data and do not depend on a few well-chosen ‘examples’, (Silverman (2001, p. 222).

When considering validity after a study has been completed, Creswell (2013, p. 243) raises two important questions of qualitative research. The first question, “Did we get it right?” is acknowledged to Stake (1995, p. 107) and the second, “Did we publish a ‘wrong’ or inaccurate account?” is attributed to Thomas, (1993, p. 39). Creswell (2013,

p. 243) applies these questions to methods of establishing, “whether the account was valid, and by whose standards?” and offers different “perspectives” and “terms” (p. 244) for validation from eight researchers. The terms they use are all distinct from those used in quantitative research and employ interpretive perspectives.

In my thesis I used multiple data sources to compare and connect perspectives from quantitative surveys, literature, UK educated Nepalese graduates, employers and education consultancies. It was not possible for me to return to Nepal to check for, “respondent validity” (Silverman 2010, p. 278) but the opportunity was taken at the end of each interview to clarify my understanding of any points or words used that might give cause for misinterpretation as in the example below:

Researcher	Respondent MG 07
Can you tell me about foreign investment?	Absolutely, we already have partnerships with many foreign companies.
I was trying to ask about Development money.	Absolutely. The war did send the country back 50 or 60 years. On top of that the lack of a real governing body has hampered us. All political parties think they have very little time when they are in power and they must get as much for their people as possible and the country’s development takes a back seat. That’s one of the things I see that’s happening and I am sure others would confirm that. So, the business community are risk takers. When we open our shutters every day in Nepal you are risking everything anyway!
My notes. Source: Interview Transcript	<i>Misunderstanding of investment. Ask again if this occurs. Note introduction of political factors and self reliance</i>

Angen (2000, p. 387) suggests that within interpretative research, validity is, “a judgement of the trustworthiness or goodness of a piece of research.” Creswell (op. cit., p. 248) argues that Angen (op. cit.), “exposes an ongoing dialogue of what makes interpretive research worthy of our trust.” Angen (op. cit.) offered two types of validity ethical validity and substantive validity.

4.5.2.2 Ethical validity

This thesis complied with the perspective on ethical validity in that there are no “underlying moral assumptions, political or ethical implications of the research and there was equitable treatment of diverse voices” (Angen, 2000, p. 389). Ethics approval was given by Anglia Ruskin University with written confirmation from the British Council in Kathmandu that UK ethics approval would be acceptable in Nepal. Introductions to potential participants came from various sources and there were clear criteria for recruitment of participants, all of whom were unknown to myself before any of the interviews took place.

The purposive sampling method also ensured, “equitable treatment of diverse voices” (Angen, 2000, p. 387) in that there was representation of both male and female Nepalese graduates who had studied undergraduate or postgraduate courses in either a pre- or post-1992 UK university. The written consent of participants was always obtained and they were kept informed on their right to withdraw from the research at any time. All data were anonymised either by myself in the writing up of transcripts or by the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Organisation with respect to the online IAP questionnaires.

4.5.2.3 Substantive validity

With respect to substantive validity, I believe I have demonstrated, as a researcher that, “I understand my own topic and understandings from other sources and the documentation of this process in the written study” (Angen, 2000, p. 389). I also believe

I have shown a measure of self-reflection in reviewing my role ‘as the researcher’ and in my discussion on reflexivity both of which I cover later in this chapter.

The pilot and context interviews enabled pre-testing of questions and question structure, which afforded opportunities for modifications. Conducting moderately structured depth interviews enabled, “rich description” (Geertz, 1973, p. 3) to be obtained whilst giving sufficient time and opportunity for participants to reflect on their input. A final summary question in all interviews allowed me to check on any issues arising from the interview which needed further clarification. All data was recorded and transcribed by myself, enabling verbatim statements to be evidenced which counted towards the identification of themes and associate themes discussed in the findings in Chapter five and discussion in Chapter six.

I have followed advice from Richard and Lewis (2003) by writing up results that remains ‘true’ to the original data but affording an opportunity to others to ascertain that the interpretation given is well supported. I believe that presentation of the research in my thesis allows the reader, as far as possible (Mays and Pope, 1995), to distinguish the data, the analytic framework used, and the interpretation I have made.

Ritchie and Lewis (2003) noted that questions regarding the validity of qualitative research relate more to issues of representation, understanding and interpretation, thereby posing a question related to accurately reflecting on the phenomena under study as perceived by the study population. The study population in this thesis are Nepalese graduates from UK university business studies their employers from a cross section of Nepalese organisations and their educational consultants. I believe that transparency in undertaking my research is demonstrated in the availability of anonymised copies of my

interview transcripts for further study. This has contributed to the “truth overcoming doubts as to the validity of the explanation” (Silverman, 2010, p. 275).

4.5.2.4 Reliability

In explaining the methods used for coding and developing the themes and associate themes, I concurred with the view that, “It is incumbent on the scientific investigator to document his or her procedure” (Kirk and Miller, 1986, p. 72). I read and re-read, the transcripts, listened and re-listened to the interview recordings taking full advantage of simple that counting techniques. Silverman (2010, p. 286) suggested counting is possible in the belief that the credentials for the data are high in any qualitative study.

I plan to allow the reader to gain a full appreciation of the data through the discussion in Chapter six of verbatim citations collected from the participant groups. Seale suggested that “low inference descriptors” include verbatim citations of, “what people say...rather than researcher’s reconstructions of the general sense of what a person said” (p. 148). As I have read and listened to all the interviews myself, I will be able to take into consideration, “interview continuers” (Silverman, 2010, p. 287) which encourage participants to contribute more to their responses. This thesis complied with the conclusion of Mays and Pope (1995) that the interview methods chosen and, in this research online questionnaires, influenced positively the data collected and the interpretations made.

4.5.2.5 Limitations of the research

A limitation of interpretivist research could be that participant perceptions enable the articulation of those experiences truthfully. I remain confident that from interviewing

twenty-three business studies graduates, and many of their employers, I had sufficient data and different perspectives to interpret the findings accurately. Hennink et al. (2011) analysed the strengths and weaknesses of in-depth interviews as undertaken planned for my research. They stated that in using depth interviewing there is no feedback from others. However, through the submission of my research as a thesis to critical readers, including the findings and discussion chapter to a Nepalese Professor, (see acknowledgements) external review has taken place. Hennink et al. (op. cit.) also advise that skills are needed to listen and react to the interviewee; I believe this is evidenced in the analysis of the interview transcripts. Hennink et al. (op. cit.) also advise that flexibility is needed to change topic order of the interview guide following the interviewee's story. This has been previously evidenced through the use of 'prompts' to the interview guide as seen in section 4.4.10.1 (data collection). Finally, Hennink et al. (op. cit.) also mention that a lot of transcription is needed and there is evidence of this in the extent of the actual transcripts of the interview.

No attempt is made by myself, as the researcher, to generalise from the findings or recommendations. It is, of course, hoped that from this interpretive approach, the findings and discussion will, "provide readers with good raw material for their own generalising" (Stake, 1995, p. 75). Using the "rich description" (Geertz, 1973, p. 3) from interview transcripts, I have addressed and answered, as thoroughly as I am able, my research questions on the influences of the educational decision-making processes of Nepalese UK educated graduates and their expectations and reflective experiences of UK Business Studies courses.

4.6 Section Five

4.6.1 Reviewing ‘my role as the researcher’

My selection of the topic was representative of a “contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 1984, p. 23) and through an approach which recognised the principles of reflexivity. I have made every attempt to gain increased recognition not only as a researcher (Steier, 1991) but also to recognise myself in the co-creation of knowledge. I chose to undertake an interpretivist qualitative inquiry, recognising the limitations of quantitative research methods, that neglected important aspects of human lives (McCracken, 1988).

In Chapter seven I provide information on my personal journey which might indicate biases and assumptions, expectations, and experiences (Greenbank, 2003) when conducting my research. My personal goal was to add to knowledge of educational decision-making for UK universities by identifying further influences on educational decision-making. I felt I could achieve this through the reflections and experiences of those Nepalese graduates who had returned home. My position in the research (Becker, 1998) has meant that the following insider/outside issues were an important consideration.

4.6.2 Insider/outside issues

Costley et al (2010) emphasises the unique position an ‘insider’ must adopt when studying a particular issue in depth. I have shown how using my experience in international marketing within a UK university helped with access to Nepalese graduates and professionals. Through my professional life, I have gained in-depth knowledge around many of the complex issues international students and graduates face in choosing

overseas study. However, that does not necessarily characterise me with the responsibilities of an ‘insider’ towards ensuring unbiased interpretation. I came to the conclusion that despite the context interviews I conducted before the main interviews, together with the literature read, I could make no claim of sharing cultural membership (Pelias, 1999) with my participants and neither had I spent sufficient time warranting a claim of insider membership.

I became comfortable in the recognition of my position in the research process as an ‘outsider’. I recognised that I did not have any personal in-depth knowledge of the many influences (seen in chapters five and six), of the implications for professional practice that would result from my research.

It is argued that all research is, “subject to criticism, as both criticism and critique are considered good practice in discussions about research and argued that criticism has some validity” (Costley et al., 2010, p. 6). My research has recognised that in, “gathering data as an outsider” I have given, “careful attention, to questions about insider/outsider bias and validity” (Murray and Lawrence, 2000, p. 18).

4.6.3 Reflexivity in qualitative research

Russell and Kelly (2002) note that reflexivity is typically represented in the literature as a process of self-examination informed primarily by the thoughts and actions of the researcher (Barry et al., 1999). Reflexivity has been cited as, “the process of critical self-reflection on one’s biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences” (Engward and Davis, 2015, p. 1530) in the acknowledgement that, “the enquirer is part of the setting, context

and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand; and a means for critically inspecting the entire research process” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 224).

Throughout undertaking my primary research and following the interviews I made self reflected notes which provided the opportunity of a re-examination of personal assumptions. Silverman (1993) argued that as the researcher(s) and respondent(s) learn and change through the conversation of an interview, they come to a mutually agreed conclusion. In my research, before concluding each interview, I gave the opportunity for participants to review any part of the recorded interview. Bamberg (1999) identified this as an interactive negotiation that ultimately defines a story's meaning. I conclude with a finding of Ahern (1999) that, as a researcher, I have made every attempt to balance the potential benefits of my involvement, as an outsider, in this thesis, by accurately representing the views of my participants throughout the process.

4.7 Conclusion to Chapter Four

This chapter opened with an explanation of the research methods used for understanding the influences on the educational decision-making of Nepalese UK educated graduates and their expectations for employment. Throughout the research process my awareness of the need for reflexivity has ensured as accurate an interpretation of the data as was possible. The ethical issues in undertaking research in Nepal, a country still experiencing political unrest, were considered and details of how the research met with Anglia Ruskin University's ethics requirements were given.

A qualitative research method has not precluded some use of quantitative data to help focus my understanding of the themes and associate themes identified. Qualitative

research methods were used to capture data and designed to ensure reliable interpretation and comply with standards for validity and reliability. My thesis has focused on “thick description” (Gertz, 1993, p. 3) but at the same time afforded an opportunity for others to develop their own interpretation, as many different perspectives are offered. The introduction of a conceptual framework, and use of NVivo qualitative research software, both provided opportunity for new insights to be developed from the findings (Chapter five) which contributed towards the discussion of the research questions in Chapter six. The results from the IAP questionnaires have already been added to the global database of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Ltd confirming their validity and reliability as a research tool.

Chapter Five: Findings

5.1 Introduction

Chapter four provided details of the qualitative research methodology and I concluded that, “whilst a quantitative and qualitative approach can consider individuals’ point of view, qualitative research can get closer to the participant by detailed interviewing” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 9). In my research, the decision was made to analyse the findings using as a conceptual framework based on Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1986, 1989, 1994) ecological model of human development and the work of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). This included using the results from the online IAP questionnaire completed by all of the graduates interviewed. The questionnaire was provided and analysed by the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Organisation.

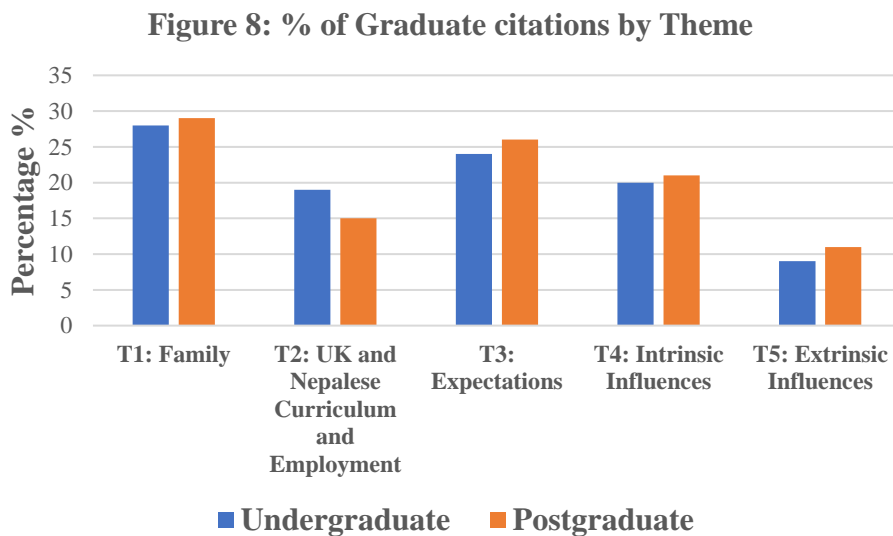
This chapter provides an overview of how the five themes and their respective associate themes were developed in order to analyse the findings from this research. Findings are supported by quantitative data showing the percentage of graduate responses coded to each theme, along with qualitative data in the form of interview citations that evidence these themes. The chapter continues with a detailed analysis of each individual theme and associate theme. Collectively they help to explain the influences on educational decision-making. Whilst the use of numbers in qualitative research can be controversial, this is following advice of Maxwell (2010 p. 480) who states that:

“The use of numbers is a legitimate and valuable strategy for qualitative researchers when it is used as a complement to an overall process orientation to the research.”

Findings from this chapter are discussed in Chapter six and lead to the conclusion in Chapter seven.

Throughout the interviews, interconnections between the thought processes of respondents became increasingly apparent. Figure 8 shows the percentage of graduates from undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses whose citations were associated with the five main themes of: Family; UK and Nepalese Curriculum and Employment; Expectations; Intrinsic Influences and Extrinsic Influences.

It demonstrates similar percentages of undergraduate and postgraduate citations coded to Family and Intrinsic Influences but undergraduates cite the Curriculum more frequently. Postgraduate mentions of Expectations and Extrinsic Influences are higher than undergraduate mentions.



Number of respondents = 23.

Source: Interview Data

Linkages between themes and concomitant associated themes are provided before the conclusion of this chapter.

The following key is used for all citations. MG = Male graduate. FG = Female graduate.
EMP = Employer. EC = Education Consultancy. CON = Context interviewee.

Details of the sample composition are shown in Table 5.

5.2 Theme 1: Family

5.2.1 Overview

Within Theme 1, the all-pervading impact on the educational decision-making of graduates was the influence of family, including the extended family. The decision-making process can be complex and lengthy for potential students. FG 06 explains, “*It took me years actually and lots of research*”. The security of employment within the family business was an important finding from this thesis. The theme also introduces the importance of a family’s historical connections to the UK; this includes, for many parents and grandparents, their experience of UK education. The analysis refers to an ongoing loyalty to family but introduces the notion of an individual seeking a measure of personal independence through overseas study. This has been evaluated as an aspiration for the educational experience itself, but not a desire to seek any permanent disaffection from the responsibilities of, and to, family. Finance was also cited but more often as a reason for unfulfilled expectations for those with insufficient funds to complete their studies. The graduates interviewed in this study were generally sufficiently funded by their family or from scholarships. No students interviewed were in receipt of a British Council Chevening scholarship award.

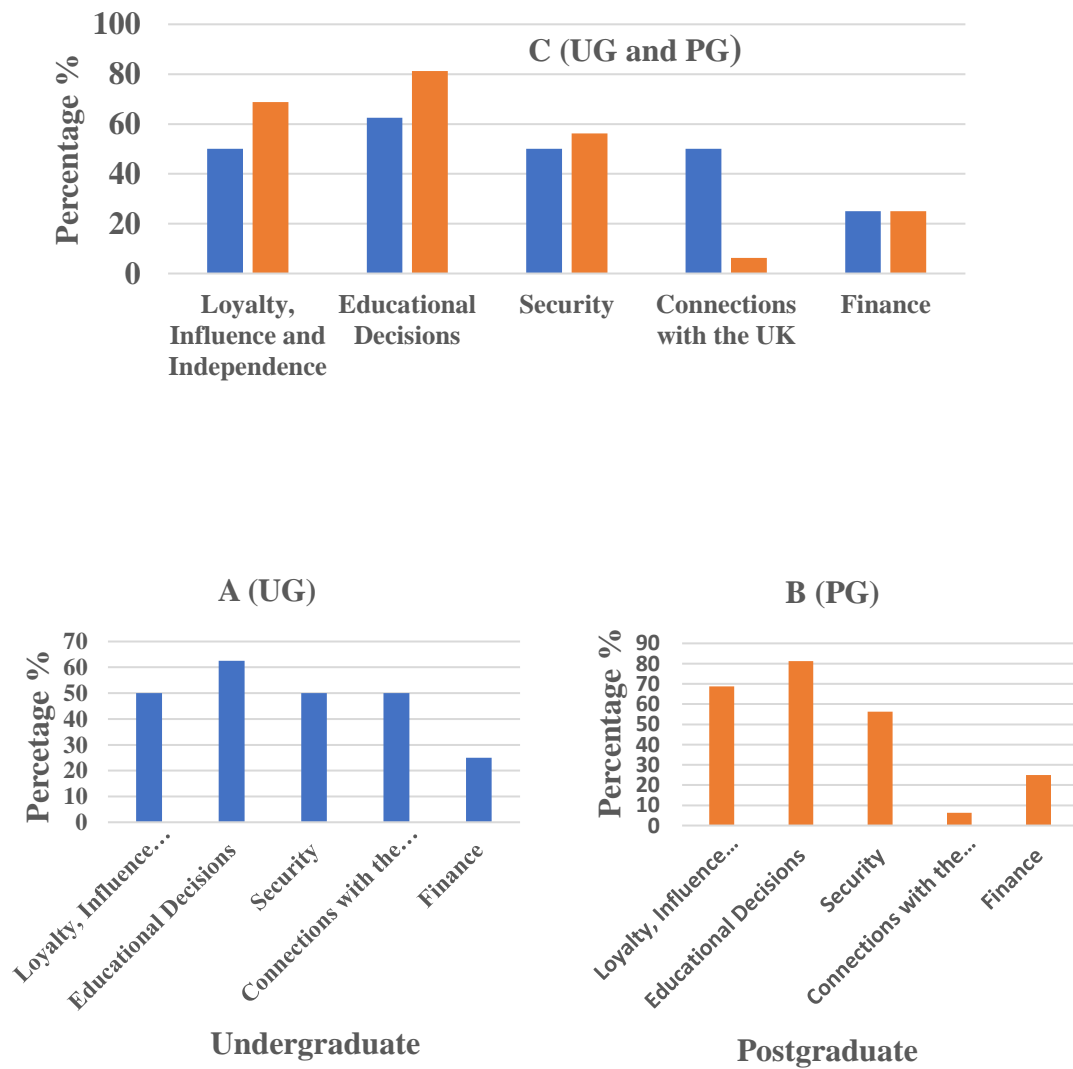
The five constituent elements of Theme 1: Family which form the associate themes are:

- Loyalty, Influence and Independence
- Educational Decisions

- Security
- Connections with the UK
- Finance

Figure 9 shows the percentage of citations by undergraduates and postgraduates for each of these associate themes.

Figure 9: Theme 1: Comparison of Undergraduate and Postgraduate citations (%'s)



Number of respondents = 23.

Source: Interview data

Chart C (UG and PG) demonstrates a higher percentage of citations from undergraduates for connections with the UK. It also shows, overall, higher percentages of citations from postgraduates than undergraduates for Loyalty, Influence and Independence, Educational Decisions and Security; the exception is for Finance which is similar for both groups. Charts A (undergraduate) and B (postgraduate) highlight further differences which are discussed within the following sections of this theme.

5.2.2 Analysis of Associate Themes

5.2.2.1 AT 1: Educational Decisions

The driving force behind many of the decisions made by graduates to study in the UK was deep-rooted influence of family. This was seen in interviews and is explained by FG 02, *“Our grandparents recommended us to go to the UK rather than the US. Academically the UK is a stronger educational system.”* FG 02 in this further citation suggested, *“Our family has a kind of history that supports and makes things happen in your life”*.

Her mother ran a school in Nepal and her daughter, following education and work experience with an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) in the UK, is now working for that INGO in Nepal and comments, *“There are five in my family, a small and lovely family, my parents love me. I am still staying with them”*.

A family’s commitment to education was seen in Chapter two when the context for this thesis was discussed. It was shown that those with sufficient means could give their offspring the benefits of a private, secondary education focused on facilitating entry to overseas universities, particularly UK universities. Participant MG 07 clarifies that it is

a matter of respect one has for the hard work of the family. He explained that this enables them to send their children to, “fantastic schools” adding:

“I’ve had the pleasure of going to some of the best schools in the world. My youngest cousin is going to Eton now. Education for our family is very important. I’ve seen the positive results of a good education regime.”

In a further example, the experience of UK education is seen to extend across several generations with an education consultant, participant EC 02 mentioning that he is from, “a very good family” and:

“It’s about history. My father went to the UK for his higher education and he wanted to continue this for his son, from generation to generation. The tradition is to study in the UK.”

There is evidence in the next citation of a tendency to look to the UK for higher education for future generations. Participant FG 03 endorses UK education, “*Because the UK has wonderful universities*” but only, “*if it is open to people from different cultures*” and “*if it acts as a platform where they can learn from each other’s experience*”.

5.2.2.2 AT 2: Loyalty, Influence and Independence

Graduates considered that independence from family rules and regulations was one of the most valued aspects of overseas study. Returning home would mean that the graduate would most likely have to revert to the rules and regulations they had sought to leave behind. The concept of a measure of freedom from family authority was evidenced in several transcripts as seen in this comment from FG 14 explaining, “*The reason I went to UK was the freedom to breathe fresh air, be who you are*”.

Employer EMP 01 introduced a note of caution in defining expectations, “*My advice for graduates wanting to come back is to select a course which gives you the knowledge*

and skills Nepal needs.” All the interviews were undertaken with graduates who, in most cases, on returning recognised the continuing authority of the family. They had been financially supported and in return they accepted that they owed loyalty to the family and bore responsibilities in meeting the family’s expectations of a UK education.

Graduates interviewed accepted their responsibilities and loyalty to family with FG 20 explaining how, “Yes it’s comfortable here. We live in a family. So, we get help from each other. I get help from my parents and brother. We don’t have to worry about much in our life”. In the context discussion group, the reasons why graduates, currently overseas, might return to Nepal were explained in terms of experiencing a better work-life balance. Participant MG 12, from his knowledge and experience of Nepalese who had returned home after many years earning and remitting money to families referred to respect as well as family.

“If you’re thinking in terms of money you can probably make more money outside but in Nepal you have more respect, more family ties which are very valuable to us. Even if you are earning 50% less the respect you get from a lot of people is 50% higher.”

Concerns over working patterns in the UK, with regard to work-life balance overall, were seen in the following citation from participant FG 09 adding her perspective on work-life balance she experienced in the UK, *“There is no time for the family. Here in Nepal we work from 10 until 5pm and then the rest of the day is with the family”*.

There were exceptions to the willingness to accept the unchanged traditions of family life with participant FG 06 drawing attention to a situation which negated the benefits of any independence achieved overseas because of the forced returns of graduates to Nepal:

“They (graduates) came back. But they are not liking it at all. They had to come back and they find themselves back in the same place with all sorts of the same rules and regulations and their independence also gone.”

This citation summarises the difficulties that can arise in educational decision-making. Participant MG 04 provided insight into the personal motivation of a graduate for studying in the UK by explaining, *“I thought UK would be my better option because I was not planning to settle in any other country”*. Participant FG 04 explained the significance of finance from the extended family confirming, *“We are involved in a joint business, everyone is involved in paying for my education”*. Facing up to political interference and loss of personal freedom in everyday life and business (seen in Chapter two), FG 04 further commented, *“The best part of being in the UK is the peace of mind, no matter how much you earn. As a tourist, Nepal is heaven”*.

With respect to the work-life balance, however, participant MG 04 offered an alternative picture.

“I like working at high pressure. 24 hours a day. The quality of living and standard of living is very high over here if you have the money, compared to the UK. If you are in business here, you still have some fear of the government officials or they can come and raid at any time.”

It was also established how the expectations of returning graduates could cause some concern for employers with respect to their terms and conditions of employment. This is a particularly sensitive issue for employers as there are increasing numbers of locally educated graduates with similar skills.

5.2.2.3 AT 3: Security

In the findings, there was a close relationship between security, seen to represent family, and employment in the family businesses. In this associate theme the importance of

family and longevity of family businesses was confirmed as a continuing influence on educational decision-making with its importance to securing the future of the family.

After explaining that his family sold land and property to pay for his overseas education, participant MG 04 explained the role of the extended family in the decision-making process.

“I did my schooling (in Nepal) and started applying for undergrad. Because we have a joint family business here, so not only does my father agree that he is ready and willing to send me, my elders and uncles also have to say let him go.”

This finding adds to the research from Ji, (2013, p. 201) in interviews undertaken with young female Nepalese adults:

“In my participants’ view, being educated means one is competent, able to find a well-paid job, is understanding, good at handling family relations, respected by neighbours, and capable of educating others.”

Indeed, one graduate in this thesis described a family business as a ‘mapping’ process experienced over several generations, with FG 07 commenting, *“My mother is a writer. So, I took up the family business in a way because I write short stories”*. The control processes within family businesses were said to differentiate Nepal from other countries with FG 01 explaining, *“Everything is controlled by the eldest family member and even in our businesses all our Dads control the business”*.

Employment in a family business was important for many graduates interviewed but, conversely, was a barrier to the career development, including expectations, for those without these family connections as participant MG 07 states:

“The family business is your wealth. If it’s a family business, then traditionally it runs out in 3 generations...then there’s the 3rd generation, that’s me at this point. And these ranges of choice were mapped out for us.”

Employing family members was seen as an advantage to businesses as a family member was more likely to be a loyal, trustworthy and respectful employee. This commitment to family is shown by participant MG 22 who states:

“If I start a business then my family would expect that I give jobs to them. That’s very natural in Nepal, very common. If someone starts a business, even a far relative, they would expect a job – even if they are not educated. They are not competitive in the market. It might change, as a company develops you need more specialist staff, e.g. accountants.”

The citation refers to the starting-up of a new business but juxtaposes family expectations with the developing needs of a business when specialist skills are required outside of the existing skills base of family members. It was recognised by both graduates and employers that even in this closely-knit society, characterised by family businesses, there is an ongoing need for updating skills for managing a business.

Even those joining larger organisations in Nepal outside their own family connections commented on how these businesses were still largely run by families adhering to traditional thinking. The enduring virtues of family trust and loyalty were seen by employers, though not unequivocally, as an advantage to their businesses. Whilst UK education was clearly the choice of participants in this thesis, it was not always viewed without reservation by employers.

When considering whether to recruit those with a UK education as shown in this quote from participant EMP 01:

“It does not mean that if they’ve studied in the UK they have studied in a very good college, or university. There are good colleges in Nepal or India where the course is equally rigorous.”

The employer's view of the choice of college or university was influenced by the amount of information available to them on entry qualifications, the number of modules studied and the duration and international comparability of qualifications.

In summary, the influence of 'family' remains a characteristic of employment in Nepal. The security offered within family and family businesses was cited by over 50% of all graduates, as shown in Figure 8. In Chapter six, the security of family and family businesses are regarded as 'insurance' against political instability and uncertainty over infrastructure developments. This is supported by findings that education remains a principal means of sustaining familial wealth.

5.2.2.4 AT 4: Connections with the UK

Many graduates reported that they had benefitted from the support of family or relatives in the UK with participant FG 17 acknowledging, *"I was lucky. I had my Aunt. I was also supported by other relatives"*.

Although many graduates choose to remain overseas after graduating, their motivation is in sharp contrast to the outlook shown by an older generation participant in the context interviews as CON 03 commented, *"We never thought about staying abroad. I never liked to stay, live anywhere else"*.

The children of many Ghurkha families have benefitted from education in the UK. One reason this has been made possible is by Ghurkha salaries and pensions being brought into line with UK rates. These are significantly higher than previous Nepalese rates. Through this pecuniary advantage, Ghurkha families have enjoyed a special position in

Nepalese society through these historical connections to the British army, as seen from participant MG 23 who states that:

“When I was small the first country I knew was India and second the UK. The British and the British Army, the Ghurkhas. Also, the education system, like the British system. It’s very easy for us to go to the UK. Culture and language... when they knew I was from Nepal they had a completely different attitude. It’s very accommodating for us to come to Britain for education.”

Connections to the UK include English language skills stemming from the early establishment of education by the Rana regime, based on an English paradigm as shown in Chapter three. This association to the benefits of English was outlined by participant FG 02 who comments, *“I have heard that ‘A’ levels makes it easier for you to go abroad, everything was studied in English”*.

5.2.2.5 AT 5: Finance

For many of the graduates it was shown within AT 4 (Security) that a recurring feature has been the role of the nuclear or extended family as a source of finance both for domestic, private, secondary education as well as tertiary overseas education. However, as this citation from participant MG 19 shows, as a condition of using family money to sponsor the education, the family may get to influence the choice of subject that a student studies, *“The family gives money. The brother gives him the money and he says music, ‘no good’...the money comes from the family”*.

The following citation shows how private secondary educations enter into the political process and financial equation, with politicians, with our (Source withheld), *“Our Maoist leaders, communist leaders, saying private schools are charging too high and they should lessen the price. But even they sent their children abroad”*. The education consultants interviewed noted that most students wishing to study overseas were from

the higher social classes. This citation, from participant EC 01, links a family's ability to pay for overseas study with attitudes towards Nepalese education.

“In the high or upper middle class, everybody is going out to study. Those who can afford to pay £30,000 per programme. Those who have the financial means are all going because Nepal does not have good higher education.”

Furthermore, graduates in this study from higher social classes would not normally have been required to work whilst studying. However, a converse view was expressed by participant MG 17 when discussing the financing of his postgraduate study in the UK, which demonstrated how working for two years in Nepal was insufficient to finance his studies as he still needed additional funding support from the family, *“Some from me, the rest from my parents. Working for only two years in Nepal is not going to give you enough money for university in UK”*.

5.2.3 Summary of Theme 1: Family

The findings of this theme, demonstrate that educational decisions are heavily influenced by family, including extended family. Loyalty to family often has to be balanced with the desire for more personal independence. The numerical evidence in Figure 9 shows that there were more citations by undergraduates than postgraduates regarding the close connections to family members in the UK when making educational decisions. It was also noted that most graduates interviewed for this thesis came from higher social classes with parents able to finance their studies in the UK. Those from less financially secure backgrounds explained the importance of financial contributions from their extended family. However, in this citation from participant EC 02, an education consultant, social class may not always be the determinant of financial prowess.

“A group who go overseas are higher or lower middle-class students whose parents cannot afford all the education but part of it. They choose countries where they can work part-time and students try to make their living expenses and part of their fees during vacations.”

5.3 Theme 2: UK and Nepalese Curriculum and Employment

5.3.1 Overview

Research from the impact of work experience outcomes (BIS, 2013) raised several concerns about the experience of international graduates towards transitioning into employment from UK HE. This thesis adds to these findings and highlights a concern from graduates, employers and education consultancies on the overall lack of local graduate jobs in Nepal. Those Nepalese graduates educated overseas, without the security offered from family businesses or qualifications in areas of skills shortage identified by employers in this thesis, faced the most problems on their return to Nepal.

This theme also introduces the influence of reputation, teaching methods and teaching culture into the experience and assessment of UK education. The need for introducing and developing entrepreneurship skills, explained by employers as identifying and implementing opportunities, into more courses was also suggested by graduates. Graduates also advocated a requirement to concentrate more on practice within courses as well as building work experience and internship programmes into business courses. One graduate summed up the view of all graduates interviewed in this thesis that the main purpose of their UK education was securing a ‘good’ job.

All participants recognised the educational successes that Nepal had historically in subjects such as medicine, governance and engineering. It has been shown, for example, that (NepalStudent, 2017, p. 1):

“Engineering! This is the most common answer you will get if you ask a science student of +2 in Nepal that what s/he wants to study after completing their intermediate level. Engineering is only taught in English in all the Engineering colleges of Nepal. There is no provision to study Engineering in Nepali Language and it does not seem that this will happen in the near future. So, students wishing to studying Engineering in Nepal must be prepared for this and have a good understanding of English language.”

Whilst Nepalese Government secondary schools are free, they normally teach in Nepalese only. In the fee paying, private schools’ sector, students are generally taught in English which gives them an advantage when applying for both home and overseas education in the UK and other English-speaking countries.

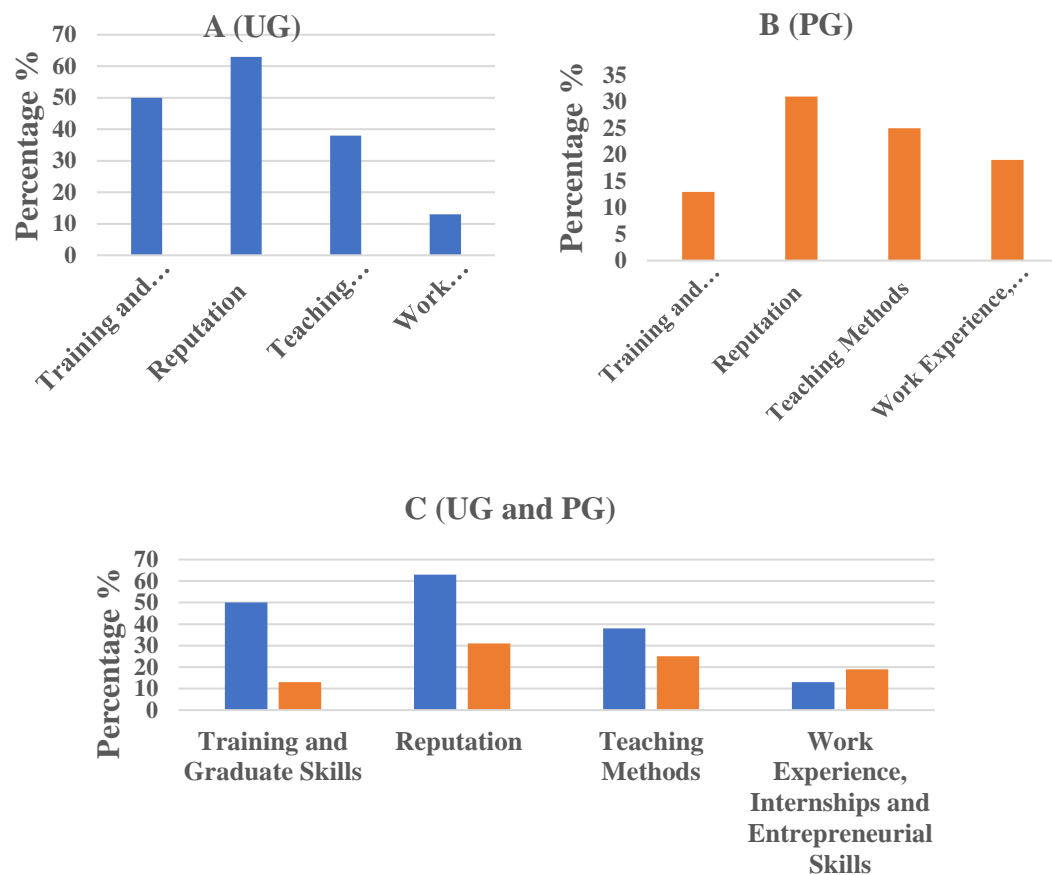
Participant MG 03 advised that, “*Students who get their +2 [‘A’ level stage] from a Government school, they usually want to go to a Government university in Nepal*”.

The four associate themes which emerged from Theme 2: UK and Nepalese Curriculum and Employment are:

- Training and Graduate Skills
- Reputation
- Teaching Methods
- Work Experience and Entrepreneurial Skills

Figure 10, below, shows the percentages of citations by undergraduates and postgraduates for each of these associate themes.

Figure 10: Theme 2. Comparison of Undergraduate and Postgraduate citations



Number of respondents = 23.

Source: Interview data

Chart C demonstrates that the percentage of undergraduates mentioning all the associate themes, except 'Work experience' was higher than for postgraduates. Chart A (undergraduate) and chart B (postgraduate) highlight further differences between respondent groups.

5.3.2 Analysis of Associate Themes

5.3.2.1 AT 1: Training and Graduate Skills

Although some employers had noted improvements in the quality of Nepalese education, participant FG 01 summarises a general feeling expressed by many graduates in that:

“What happens is that the universities, in Kathmandu especially, are run by the Nepalese Government. So, education is not as good and is not as strong as the education you get in the UK or abroad.”

Explaining the frustration regarding the lack of jobs in Nepal for graduates, this employer, participant EMP 01, was critical about the lack of capital for financing business expansion and inadequate investment in the national infrastructure to support development.

“I can understand their frustration. The youth population is growing. So many thousands of graduates. Not too many companies wanting to invest, right now. Local resources are not adequate [referring to electricity, infrastructure in general] and not enough capital for big companies to expand and employ sizeable numbers of people.”

The problem of finding employment was said to be far worse outside major cities as participant MG 10 stated:

“You see if you go out of the Kathmandu Valley, you’ll see it’s an underdeveloped country. You have less opportunity over there. You have to have your own business. You have to be more innovative.”

The importance of training in managing people and organisational skills were identified in this research with participant, PG 07 saying, *“Here, you have to earn the respect by doing things.”* He goes on to confirm that regardless of whether the organisation is seen to be friendly or not, *“They will test you. That’s the thing here. Nothing is handed to you”.* He continues by saying:

“If you go into a management trainee job in a UK company, it’s not the same thing. It may be a better experience in some ways but different to starting up a business from nothing.”

This citation draws attention to the differences between management training in the UK and the importance of developing the entrepreneurial skills required for starting a new enterprise in Nepal.

Another graduate, participant MG 08, who had worked on a management training scheme in a major manufacturing company was disappointed with its outcomes. He found the schemes had inhibited, not enhanced, his personal development so questioned the integrity of his training.

“When I started there, they had a management training programme but they were doing that just for the sake of showing to society that they were a company who also promoted young professionals. But there was no training mechanism in their system which would bring them up in the organisation.”

Although recognising the importance of training, the employer confirmed they had withdrawn from externally procured and expensive schemes because, as explained by an employer participant EMP 07, *“It’s not from Kathmandu. Training comes from (consultants in) Singapore or London”*. In his opinion, this type of training offers a poor return on their financial investment, arguing that employees often left for new employment after their training and adding that, *“Unless you know that you have people who are loyal to you, why would you invest in them?”* However, although sceptical about externally sourced training, this employer still recognised that investment in training for professionals was essential. It was a risk both to employers if staff moved as well as employees who, as seen in Chapter two, had no job security from employment regulations at the time of these interviews with EMP 07 confirming, *“Because employers don’t have a safety net either”*.

Employers in larger organisations, including multi-nationals as well as family owned firms, advised that there were significant skills shortages in some subject areas. Although vacancies were currently being filled by recruiting graduates with qualifications gained from overseas study, employers were critical of the lack of career(s) advisory services in state and private schools as well as the lack of careers

information relevant to their specific situation from HE providers and education consultancies, including the British Council in Kathmandu. This lack of information on appropriate courses for career opportunities resulted in many graduates studying subjects for which there were few opportunities.

The following citation from an experienced human resources manager, participant EMP 04, shows concerns with respect to students' motivation to study overseas in the first place. In this instance the cost benefit of overseas education is raised, given that there are educational opportunities that could be more cost effective in India or Nepal:

“Some students are going to the UK with the intention to work rather than study. If education had been their priority they could have gotten a good, and cheaper Indian education. I think it's a craze to go to the Western countries. But some people, like me, have been here for ten years and after talking to people for a while you can get an idea of where they come from, their experience and attitude.”

Graduate participant MG 04 introduces what he sees as a difference between locally educated (domestic) graduates and UK educated Nepalese graduates. He raises the issue of a traditional, often described as an 'orthodox' management approach, when compared to the open mindedness of a UK educated Nepalese graduate:

“I know many of those corporate people of my age group who have returned from foreign education, they came from the UK they are better, they are open minded, they can execute things by themselves, but many of the people, skilled labour in Nepal cannot do. They (Nepalese) have to be guided, monitored at every turn when they execute their duties.”

Issues and implications around the meaning of these styles of management from both graduate and employer perspectives for both domestic and overseas educated graduates are discussed further in Theme 3 (Expectations) and Theme 4: Intrinsic Influences.

The major issues in the findings for this associate theme, focus on training and employment opportunities arising from UK education, difficulties in finding

employment and questions over training provided. Overall, overseas education is seen by the graduates in this study as a positive way forward.

5.3.2.2 AT 2: Reputation

During the transcription process it became apparent to me that there was confusion amongst participants between the terms ‘brand’ and ‘reputation’. However, in analysing the transcripts further, ‘reputation’ was chosen as the descriptor for this associate theme. as it was felt that the use of the term ‘brand’ was limiting the analysis. The interviewees referred principally in interviews to a university’s reputation, subject or course excellence and overall rankings of UK universities. This included evidence of world-class reputation for some UK universities.

The professional approach of UK universities was also noted, including such details as start and finish time of courses. Surprisingly, graduates also referred to the adherence to deadlines for assignments as well as dates adhered to for examinations and results. This compared to their experience of state school education in Nepal, where politically motivated strikes had disrupted their education and often gave rise to lengthening of courses and uncertain completion times. The influence of strikes and disruptions to education on decisions to study overseas are referred to in greater detail in Chapter two.

The context interviews had proposed that students could be categorised into groups. This notion was introduced during the interviews with graduates with general agreement, as shown in the following citation, that there were essentially two groups of students with FG 03 saying, *“There’s the trend, fashion students. Go anywhere. Just get out (of Nepal)”*. She continued that in the second group, there were students, *“who have an objective. They are more likely to be postgraduates”* As seen earlier in Figure 9

postgraduates were more likely to be concerned with the curriculum and reputation of their university than undergraduates.

It was the experience of education consultants interviewed that postgraduates were more likely than undergraduates to have been personally involved in the selection process for their university and/or course. Consultants cited their greater use of internet searches and reliance on recommendations. Postgraduates were also said by education consultants to more likely have come to terms with many of the issues seen in the next associate theme of Teaching Methods that are a cause of frustration.

Whilst the reputation of UK universities was important, an employer's interpretation of an institution's reputation was more likely to be formed around published rankings, entry qualifications, course content and length. Participant EMP 01 commented, *"Just because they have studied in the UK we are obliged to give them a good position"*. Comparisons between USA and UK qualifications by employers gave rise to uncertainties over some UK qualifications, especially MBAs. Employers in Nepal were sceptical of universities admitting graduates to postgraduate Business Studies courses without previous work experience or opportunities to gain experience through internships. EMP 02 added, "What I've noticed is that people who do the MBA without work experience have the theoretical knowledge but they are unable to apply [it]".

Employers regretted the loss of the UK's two-year post-study work visa for graduates from April 2012. Graduates and employers were very aware of similar schemes available in other countries, including the USA and Australia. Although a Tier 1, Post-Study Work, points-based visa system is still available, the two-year post-study work visa had been attractive to both graduates and employers. It enabled students to obtain

practical experience and exposure to understanding issues in the work environment, an aspect of courses that both graduates and employers felt needed more emphasis in UK courses.

New courses, with or without overseas partners, were being offered in Nepal by Nepalese universities and colleges. This was increasing the number of domestically qualified graduates available to employers. However, employers valued specific courses from higher ranked UK universities but, again, referred to their preference for specialist skills, such as accountancy and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) where there were skills shortages in Nepal. In this example, a banker, participant EMP 01, refers to specialist finance courses which might be more apposite than a general MBA:

“The advice given to most students is to do a general MBA but if they want to do banking there are one or two very specialist ones which do specialist banking and finance modules within the MBA but there are specialist Masters courses from universities in the UK which are very good. They are more applied.”

Employers were conscious that graduates from some of the UK’s highest ranked universities would not normally seek employment in Nepal and those who did return to the country would normally be employed in family businesses. Participant EMP 01 pointed out, *“We do have a few people from other (lower ranked) universities who are working for us. It makes it difficult to assess a graduate’s learning”*.

Participant PG 03, a graduate, emphasises that the international reputation of a university course was, for them, their major consideration and not solely the reputation of the country itself. He went on to explain, *“As long as we go on believing that British education can give us and utilise that knowledge, people will go to those institutions and study there”*.

5.3.2.3 AT 3: Teaching Methods

Whilst graduates commented favourably on support programmes to address cultural differences in the UK for incoming international students, they drew attention to limited support programmes offered to graduating students. Given the emphasis on future employment throughout this thesis, graduate participant MG 16 was disappointed with the amount of advice given on courses suggesting there was, “*No information about work. They did not say how beneficial the course would be*”.

It was argued by graduates that lecturers needed to become aware of a student’s personal circumstances, including any previous work experience and career aspirations or study expectations. In an earlier study, attention was drawn to the fact that, “Nepali students look upon memorising and understanding as interlinked in a way not usually found among Western students” (Dahlin and Regimi, 1997, p. 471). A more detailed knowledge of the student’s background would enable more pertinent advice to be given to students. Although recognising there were often opportunities to develop their study skills, it was felt by many graduates that students still needed this guidance to maximise their learning from UK study courses as participant MG 10 stated:

“There should be more skills development in each subject. Leadership, management practices. You should learn them in each subject. Entrepreneurial skills can be included in other subjects. Not as separate subjects.”

Another view expressed by graduates related more to the teaching methods themselves. When questioned about the value of the course, participant MG 06 questioned the choice of some case studies, explaining, “*A lot of the teaching assumes large companies and many students will never work in these places*”. Graduates also commented that they experienced difficulties in understanding how complex concepts might be useful to them

in the future with participant MG 06 clarifying, *“How are these models useful to us when running a restaurant?”*

They also attributed these difficulties, in part, to an over reliance on the use of ‘PowerPoint’ presentations and use of the internet with participant MG 06 adding, *“Lecturers came with a power point presentation. They gave 1 hour. They came and then went”*. He believed using these methods gave staff too little time to explain ideas and for discussion, concluding, *“This led to missed opportunities for students to discuss problems with teaching staff”*.

Participant FG 02 confirmed that problems may be related to teaching methods that are unfamiliar and ‘completely different’ to Nepalese students. She gave as an example of unfamiliar methods, the use of plagiarism checks noting, *“We don’t have that kind of system. You just can copy from books, every social media.”*

The argument for academic staff understanding more of the teaching and learning backgrounds of students was developed further, with postgraduate participant PG 07 identifying the skills needed for returnees from overseas universities. He concluded that UK Business Studies courses should focus more on the implementation of skills and knowledge are of greater relevance to the home business environment of graduates from the many different countries studying at the university:

“When you are in those universities you meet people from all sorts of background, from social enterprise, coming from NGO’s, from Investment Banks and they eventually will go back to their countries and companies and try to put together or try to implement some of the things they learnt in the programme. How to work together in a team. How to build consensus. How do we move forward in terms of strategy? It can be applied wherever you go.”

Further insight into problems experienced by graduates comes from participant MG 06 who draws attention to the lack of monitoring student attendance:

“It was a common problem. In X university, there were times to see teachers but no one would go to see them. They just attend the lecture class. There is no signing of an attendance sheet, so students focus on working, earning money and skip the class. They just sign the sheet.”

However, it was also recognised that part of the problem with fully engaging in their studies was due to the level of English and general knowledge of business in a developed economy. Many students come from remote, rural areas away from the main cities such as Kathmandu or Pokhara. Participant MG 09, now teaching in Nepal, commented:

“They do not have the English skills and may not have the qualifications. Kathmandu style is very fast. But when they live outside major cities there are no communications, nothing. No foundations in subjects. I ask which areas are you interested in? They don’t know.”

Education consultancies were aware of the need for high standards of English for overseas study but were critical of insufficient IELTS language centres and testing slots at the British Council in Kathmandu to meet offer conditions, and admissions to, UK universities.

Whilst learning resources, including libraries and computing facilities, were commended by many graduates, participant MG 16 expressed his disappointment with the facilities provided by his university. Although this was the only example given in this thesis, the student raised overcrowding (including a lack of chairs) and insufficient student diversity in classes as potential issues for UK Higher education institutions to address. He said his experience had led, *“to dreams about the UK being totally changed”*.

Of greater concern to graduates was the relevance of teaching materials and case studies selected which were thought to be too UK-centric. Given the diversity of international

students on courses at UK universities, some graduates felt application of theory to meet the needs of those graduates returning to developing countries was often missing whilst participant MG 07 gave an alternative interpretation when dismissing such suggestions:

“I’ve heard that argument said to me so many times. Why do you want to waste your money going to a fancy university and come back here and you are going to face Nepalese problems? I say, “Of course, but if you think about all of the case studies, everything studied, during the MBA or even during undergraduate, there are very common issues that occur in businesses.”

Finally, participant FG 03 argued that students from different countries enhanced the learning experience and awareness of student diversity and gave those universities an advantage in attracting future international students:

“As far as community is concerned I think you can only learn better if you have people coming from different backgrounds and these institutions are considered because there are people from all over the world.”

In summarising this associate theme, this employer, participant EMP 05, states what he feels to be the situation facing UK institutions:

“If you are being taught in the UK, your teachers are English or maybe even Nepali living in England. What can you do if you have 10 nationalities? You could bring in guest speakers who understand the problems to give sessions. If you cannot do that universities must make sure they set up internship programmes in the respective countries of the students.”

The view expressed in the citation above leads into the final associate theme which explores concerns over the limited time devoted on the course to enabling learners to achieve the graduate skills and attributes expected from a UK Business Studies course.

5.3.2.4 AT 4: Work Experience, Internships and Entrepreneurial Skills

There were widely held views from both graduates and employers that UK Business Studies courses offered insufficient opportunities to practice skills in class exercises and workshops and gain experience from internships. Graduates confirmed the importance

of participation in seminars as part of the learning experience with participant MG 10 stating, *“I learnt more from the interactive programmes”*.

The findings show that the lack of work experience disadvantaged a graduate when applying for positions. The following example relates to applying for employment in a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) or International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) and was said by graduates to also apply to other major employers in Nepal. Participant MG 11 summarises why, in his opinion, he was not offered employment. He claimed NGOs or INGOs were working to fixed agendas and timescales and therefore they had to recruit experienced personnel to meet their contractual deadlines. He also suggested these projects may not have been the ones needed by the country. He advised, *“One thing about this INGO (name withheld) is they have that money. They must spend it. But they cannot spend it on what is needed”*.

Graduates, on their return to Nepal, talked about difficulties in managing situations in their own culture, referring to ‘traditional’ or ‘orthodox’ management styles. Participant MG 21 introduces the importance of working, whilst studying in the UK which is said to give useful experience when transferring into employment:

“We go there, get experience. If I am opening a cafe and I hire an employee. I know how to train him because I have worked in a good quality place in the UK. We have to work as well as studying. Studying on its own is not sufficient.”

Graduates wanted more help in understanding and managing in different cultures as it was felt this would help to apply their learning into the workplace. Participant MG 12 acknowledges that whilst not everything taught in the UK is transferable to Nepal, he could understand and empathise when specific ideas were introduced:

“Everything is a learning experience. Some things may not be as applicable in the case of Nepal. Talent management was applicable to us, not so much how to apply

it here in Nepal but just to understand it from a perspective of that feels like, "Oh my God, it's so true in Nepal."

Although there were some negatives, participant FG 13 drew attention to important differences she had experienced between the UK's approach to teaching and her studies in Nepal, *"There is a vast difference. More presentations. It's more practical in the UK, more theoretical in Nepal.* However, she added, *"My subject knowledge was not developed very much".*

However, when developing her argument about management practice, she emphasised that her knowledge of a range of operational and management issues was inadequately covered. Her lack of knowledge and experience in "managing people" gave rise to problems when entering employment in the service industry. She explained how she was approaching and resolving these issues.

"I am finding it very hard to work here (in Nepal). Lots of people are older above 50 and have worked in my housekeeping department. Sometimes I feel not really good to tell them to do this again and again. It seems like my grand mum, something like that. I am trying to change the environment, to make it friendly. If we do it this way, we will save time and money. Sometimes they are happy!"

In addressing the need for creating more job opportunities in Nepal, there was advice from employers for universities in the UK to include, or make more visible, modules to develop entrepreneurial skills. Graduates with this knowledge and experience would benefit both individuals and the Nepalese economy. The possibility of a university creating an entrepreneur as well as developing entrepreneurial skills was queried by employers.

Participant FG 04 acknowledges that the copying of new ideas is to be expected but any company offering a new product or service should still retain their advantage of being

first into the market. However, the reality is that in Nepal there is always the risk of harassment or even threats by political activists:

“There’s no problem about everyone copying. The first one will make more profit. And he’ll know much better the market idea compared to the new one. The main problem is that if you try to do something, making money, other people will extort you, harass you to get the money. Political parties are the cancer of this area who try to extort you, threaten you by any means.”

One employer, participant EMP 01, indicated that even with the entrepreneurial skills required for start-up businesses, there were still issues of how to manage a growing company:

“You can give them the (start -up) skills. The problem is growing the company from an entrepreneurial start up. The management style in corporations as opposed to small start-ups is also different of course.”

5.3.3 Summary of Theme 2

Whilst the overall reputation of UK education remains strong in Nepal, it is closely associated to individual courses as well as universities. These findings have drawn attention to the current lack of information on careers in business studies course materials but efficient course administration was a real benefit to Nepalese students. There were specific references to the importance of building entrepreneurial skills into course modules and making potential business students fully aware of courses addressing the skills shortages in Nepal. Graduates were concerned that they were not given more opportunities to practice management skills, including awareness of how different cultural behaviours could affect their management abilities on their return home to employment.

There was also criticism from employers concerning a business graduate’s ability to demonstrate the learning outcomes acquired in business studies courses. The perception

of the quality of UK qualifications was questioned by Nepalese employers in findings surrounding international comparability. Employers were concerned that internships were not normally built into business studies courses, particularly MBA programmes, some of which they noted, admitted graduates with no previous work experience. The cancellation of the two-year post-study work visa was seen by both graduates and employers as a disincentive to study in the UK as Nepalese graduates, without the benefit of a family business to return to, needed work experience to apply for jobs in Nepal and this also helped to repay the costs of international fees and maintenance.

5.4 Theme 3: Expectations

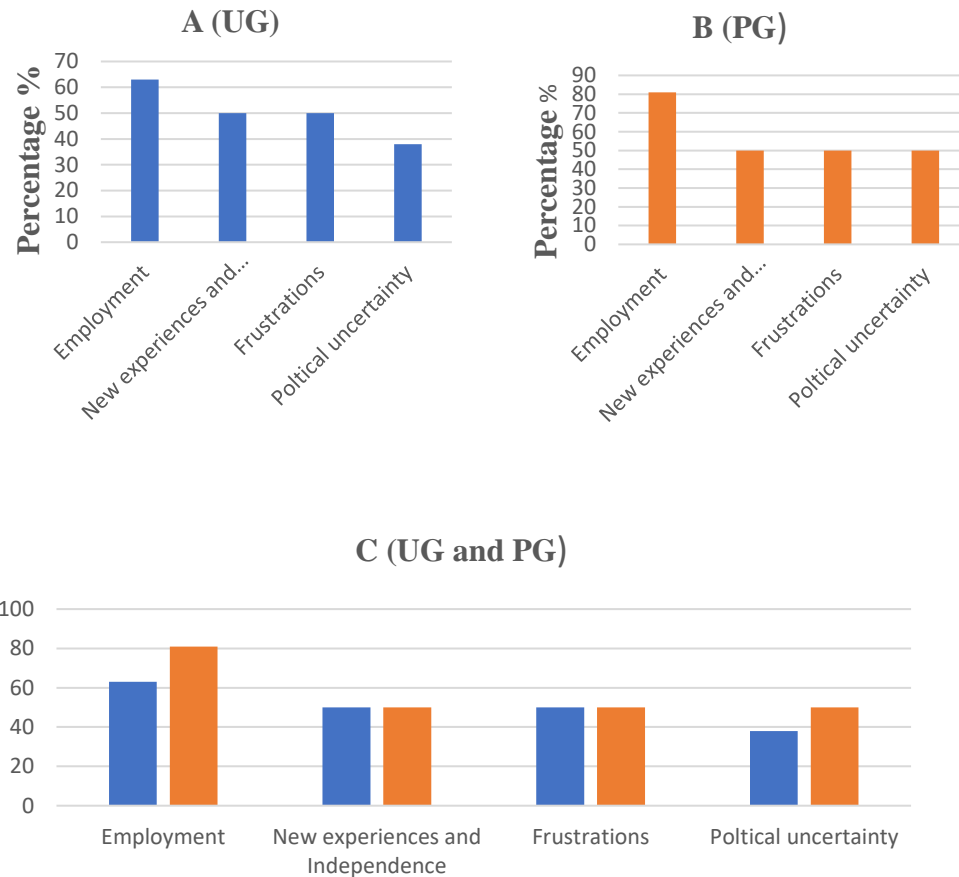
5.4.1 Overview

The decision to choose ‘expectations’ as the title for this theme arose from the view of participant MG 01 who stated that, “*one of the reasons we actually go abroad is to discover new things in life*”. This theme concentrates on whether, following study in the UK, the expectations of Nepalese graduates and employers have been fulfilled, or remain unfulfilled.

The findings are analysed using four associate themes that emerged during the coding of transcripts. Two can be classified as the ‘positive’ factors of (i) Employment and (ii) New Experiences and Independence, whilst the third and fourth are categorised as ‘negative’ factors and refer to (iii) Frustrations’ and (iv) Political Uncertainty. Chapter two referred to the ten-year civil war in Nepal and ensuing political uncertainty. The significance of the disruption to education from the civil war is seen in this theme. In my analysis I have termed Political Uncertainty as a chronosystem, the fifth system

added by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2007) to Bronfenbrenner's original four systems ecological model. Figure 11: shows the percentages of citations by undergraduates and postgraduates for each of these associate themes.

Figure 11: Theme 3: Comparison of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Citations



Number of respondents = 23.

Source: Interview Data

Chart C demonstrates that employment is the biggest concern for postgraduates. Political uncertainty, including the effects on education from strikes, lockouts and potential political interference has particular relevance for the creation and retention of jobs, also had a higher percentage of citations from postgraduates.

The Associate Themes are now considered individually.

5.4.2 Analysis of Associate Themes

5.4.2.1 AT 1: Frustrations

In this associate theme, both graduates and employers raised issues which led to expressions of frustration. The overwhelming concern of all graduates returning to Nepal after studying in the UK was finding a job. Participant MG 22 explains, *“I cannot assume I will get a job. I have to compete with local as well as graduates from the USA or Australia.”*

A contributory factor in the overall frustration of graduates relates to their financial situation. Those without sufficient funds to finance fees and subsistence were often dependent on working during their studies. Money earned could also help towards repayment of any financial support received from parents or family towards their education.

An education consultant, participant EC 02, explained further the context for financing an overseas education. He drew the distinction between those describes as, “top people” who can fully finance overseas education and those from lower income families who chose countries where they can work on a part-time basis to assist in financing their fees and subsistence. He also described a third group of students who, in just wanting to leave Nepal, are using the offer of a place at a less expensive college to finance all of their costs

“They just go there to look for those cheaper, bogus colleges, where admission policies are flexible and they can meet their tuition fees and living expenses by working part-time or more.”

A change in government regulations for students who wish to, or must, work during studies or after graduating was therefore of concern to some students and families. Changes to UK visa policies were a contributory factor in the emergence of new providers of higher education. ‘Competitors’ included universities and colleges in countries where, for example, post-study work opportunities were available. Depending on the financial and visa status of the student, courses taught in English were preferred as explained by participant EC 02:

“Obviously English-speaking countries. Students interested in the quality of education, they prefer UK or USA. If you think about the bulk of students though, it doesn’t matter which university they are going to, which country doesn’t matter. It is about whether the visa policy is flexible and whether it is easy to get a visa or not.”

The impact of changes to UK visa policies on education consultancies as advisers to many students and families is seen further in Theme 5.

Concerns were expressed over the comparative value of certain UK degrees. One of the employers interviewed, participant EMP 05 who is a senior human resources manager, explained that there was a lack of information on the ranking of certain colleges offering MBA degrees, *“Just because they have studied in the UK we are obliged to give them a good position. We do not know how to evaluate them”*. He queried how courses should be evaluated adding, *“We are a little bit sceptical because we really don’t know much about the college and whether people have done their MBA in one year or two years”*. Of concern to the employer was the shorter length of many UK MBA courses, compared to those in the USA and whether work experience was an entry requirement for UK MBA courses. He also queried whether completing an internship was essential.

Employers were also critical of the terms and conditions, including conferred status, expected by graduates returning from overseas studies. Participant MG 16, who had previously studied at undergraduate level in Nepal, had high expectations from attending a postgraduate course in the UK, *“I thought I would have a definite position. A high position”*. Participant EMP 01, another employer, suggests how graduate expectations could be lowered by reverting to a previous two-year management trainee scheme, commenting, *“First, I would lower their expectation for two years”* and then suggested, *“MBA’s should be hired from all over the world as management trainees for two years”*. He further added that there should be, *“no confirmation (of permanent employment), no benefits, etc. You’ll get this amount of salary and go to various branches, around the departments, to work”*. It was noted in Theme 2 that many employers had now withdrawn from similar training schemes.

Although the views of graduates and employers differed towards expectations of employment, the frustration of some graduates with their employment circumstances is recorded. Participant FG 01, a female graduate, demonstrated having some difficulty readjusting to the business traditions and behaviours when back in Nepal. Although she has the responsibility of bringing new clients into her bank, she expresses her frustration that, *“the final decision is made by the top, like the chairman of the Bank”*.

Her employer participant EMP 03, saw things differently arguing, *“Now they come as a supervisor, junior official and are given work from day one. They are able to give loans to big firms like Coca Cola. With no experience!”* His conclusion is that in giving a graduate responsibility without training, *“They are destroying themselves and the company.”*

Analysis of Theme 2 contained examples where graduates recommended that UK Business Studies courses should focus more attention on the management of organisations. Suggestions included working with employees from different cultural backgrounds, understanding concerns over power relationships and implementing change. An example based on the experience of participant FG 14, a graduate who had worked in the UK and returned to Nepal draws attention to the importance of effective communication between management and employees:

*“To be honest Nepal does not have good governance here. They don’t have it. When you go overseas you see how everything works. I worked in Tesco in the UK. I knew what I had to do and I knew that I had to take care of the people that worked under me. But in Nepal they tell you more than you need to know, but probably they don’t tell you what you **should** know. I mean job descriptions are not that clear.”*

A final frustration raised in this associate theme relates to negative comments from education consultancies towards some franchised UK programmes being delivered in Nepal. Whilst the qualifications themselves were not questioned, their concern was with the quality of the teachers and the training, or lack of training, received together with the management of the franchise. Confirmation of the importance of teaching was given by this education consultant, participant EC 01, *“Education and studying all depends on the teacher. It is the number one priority to be a good teacher”*. He also drew attention to teachers working in up to seven colleges noting, *“One hour here and there, you know, and it is like not dedicated or committed to one college or the students of that college”*. This led to students withdrawing from programmes arranged with him commenting, *“They dropped out after one semester and said the quality was so bad here so they had to go out (overseas)”*.

5.4.2.2 AT 2: Political Uncertainty

Political uncertainty in Nepal was outlined in Chapter two where the background to this thesis was introduced. It was raised in both the context interviews and interviews as it was a cause of frustration to all interviewees, hence there was sufficient substance to include it as a separate associate theme. As shown in Figure 11 (p. 154), it was of greater concern to postgraduates than undergraduates.

Participant FG12 discusses the differing impact of the Maoists on sectors of the population, explaining the discrepancies in the response of the authorities:

“I feel that the Maoists who make your life difficult are not targeted so much at the very top end. These people are protected by the police or army. But if you are earning a lot but have no connections you are more susceptible.”

Participant MG 16 helps to explain further views expressed by several respondents on the political influences acting on employment in Nepal. He adds to the argument that to be more successful, it is better to be working in a family business. His conclusion is based on contrasting the experience of working in the UK, where he argues that an employee respects their job and can make decisions with the negative influences of political interference in Nepal.

“It happens because of the political situation. They get a job from one political party. That political party falls down. The person was sacked. Another political party comes in. No feeling of belonging. You see that wouldn’t happen in your father’s business. You are the business. You work to make it more successful. It’s different. It is better to be in a family business rather than work for one of these companies. There they do what the boss expects them to do. In our business, I get paid by doing this job I have and want to do it. But if they don’t work for themselves they don’t have that feeling.”

The issue of political incentive, or lack of it, has resulted in failures to build adequate infrastructure, particularly in areas such as roads, energy capacity and increasing capital investment, particularly in the manufacturing sector. In a discussion on business

uncertainties within Nepal, participant MG 07, who is now successfully managing a family business and “*making money*”, gave a frank example of how life was affected by finance and political concerns:

“You see quite a lot of industry but because of the last 10-15 years of turbulent times and the changes in labour recognitions/relations the general scenario is that industries have been hit hard. On top of that there is a big energy deficit. Energy is a huge issue. A lot of foreign interest but very little political motivation here in Nepal.”

The argument for more investment is developed by participant EMP 01, an employer, with respect to capital investment in airports and hotels to meet the growth in tourism, “*There’s not a decent airport for people to come into*”. He also suggests that because of demographic changes in Nepal, “*There’s also scope for more colleges and schools because of the big, youth population*”. He underlined that there will be a need to expand services providing for an ageing population emphasising there were, “*Lots of older people now in Nepal and no youth*”. He was referring to young people working or studying overseas and *not* returning to Nepal.

In Theme 2 the lack of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nepal was highlighted. Participant employer EMP 01 was critical of the approach of foreign governments towards FDI whom, he alleged, give foreign aid directly to the Nepalese Government in preference to giving money to multi-national organisations to expand their operations in Nepal. He suggests this would be a positive way forward for allocating development aid, adding:

“Aid, it’s like giving fish not encouraging them to fish. It’s a big political issue in this country. The newspapers and media are questioning where the money is being spent. Not going where it should go perhaps.”

5.4.2.3 AT 3: New Experiences and Independence

Early on in my research a Nepalese professor, participant CON 05, explained in one of the context interviews that young people referred to the ‘miracle’ of Singapore, an impression they had built up through politically driven reporting in the media and political speeches. The professor claimed that young people had been mistakenly led, through government propaganda, to dream of Singapore as Nepal’s new future as the leaders believed this would gain votes stating, “*And the young boys their minds are full of dreams*”.

When asked if his comments applied across society he replied in some depth:

“Yes, the whole of society. It is projected by the television, the speeches of the political leaders. Before coming to power, they make long speeches. Very attractive speeches. But when they are in power they forget about their responsibilities. Yes, I remember a few of the people in power said that they would make this country another Singapore within a decade. But that’s all for the distribution of dreams for the young people, for the sake of votes. They really dream some kind of (Singapore) miracle will occur in this country. But it’s not going to happen.”

It was suggested in another context interview with participant CON 05 that the media portrays the increasing influence of cultural, economic, or political systems of Europe and North America, as becoming ‘Westernised’. This has led to either a conscious or unconscious recognition that the motivation for young people was to realise a better way of life through adopting ‘Western’ culture. He further added:

“Some people are Westernised consciously and some unconsciously. Consciousness means the ideas and feelings. People want change. People want a better life, a better way of thinking. They must change consciously rather than unconsciously because if they have the realisation that the world is changing they must follow the new trend.”

The possibility of emulating this lifestyle has become attractive to young people and, as participant MG 19 evidences participation in certain cultural and religious traditions is disappearing as a result of the influence of ‘Westernisation’

“Culture means our religions. Every month we have a festival. 2 days of holiday. Hindu and Buddhist joint festival. These days’ young people don’t want to participate. I don’t want to go. Many culture values are going down. Young people are westernised. They follow western style.”

Some graduates suggested that students themselves needed a degree of independence to fully benefit from studying overseas. They sought a degree of personal freedom that was seen in western society but not available to them in Nepal. As participant MG 21 explained, *“Abroad when children grow over 18, their parents don’t have any right to say do this, do that. They have their own way of thinking. They have their independence. But here it is a little bit different. We stay with our families. We don’t go away just like that”*. This was also seen in Theme 1: Family where one of the principal motivations for studying overseas was to achieve a degree of personal independence. In the following citation participant FG 06 explains, with some difficulty, what is meant by the idea of independence. In this analysis independence is being interpreted as non-conformity to orthodoxy.

“I don’t really know. But most of them just watching movies. They are free of their parents. They wear what they like, watch what they like. They think they can have girlfriends and boyfriends and no one is there to stop them.”

However, as shown further in this interview FG 06 added that an individual’s dreams were not always realised:

“Most of them go abroad not thinking of education, but just to make money. But if you go with that attitude to earn money and pay back the loan, then that’s the wrong attitude. Because once you go there, I’ve seen students, calling up and saying. “It’s not like in the movies or television.” It’s not the same.”

In the interview FG 06 also referred to the family's investment in education and gives the perspective that differences in educational methods may result in failure and ultimately lead to neither a degree nor a job.

"The problem is when they go from here they sell land or mortgage houses and take a lot of loans, pay a lot of interest Here everything is rote learning. There you don't have to sit for exams. The classes are not every day 10 to 5. And then you have assignments. You have all the time in the world. No one tells you to study or not. People, suddenly all this freedom they get. They misuse it, so in the end they have neither have a degree, nor a job and they put themselves in this bad situation."

A further dynamic suggested by FG 06 is that, *"if students 'get stuck' within ethnic groups, and do not mix, they may be 'missing out' on opportunities for future work"*.

The importance of developing links, particularly within families, has been shown to be essential for employment and employability in Nepal. The ability to engage in networking is, therefore, further established as a desirable learning outcome from studying in the UK. Although participant FG 06 adjusted well to life in Nepal when she returned following her studies in the UK, she stated:

"I found it was very easy to adapt myself. In my mind, as so much part of my life has been spent here (in Nepal), I didn't think I'd settle over there. I always knew at the back of my mind I was coming back. Maybe it would come as a shock if I was supposed to settle in the UK and then later come back."

However, in the second part of the interview, she described the situation for those Nepalese students and graduates who, because of changes to the UK's visa policies, had to return home. It raised many questions including working in jobs with lower salaries, issues around marriage and their perceived loss of the independence they craved. Participant FG 06 concluded with the possibility of parents questioning the value of their UK degree when considering the sacrifices, they may have made:

"I've seen so many of my friends become frustrated because they were now unable to get jobs in the UK. They had to come back when their visa was over. They didn't want to take the risk of staying illegally. They came back. But they are not liking

it at all. They were enjoying life overseas and they thought they would extend the visa and settle themselves in England. But it couldn't happen. They found themselves back in the same place with all sorts of the same rules and regulations and their independence is also gone, because they were earning and working there. Even if they are earning money here (in Nepal) it's not the same as the money they would receive over there in the UK."

Employers questioned the motivation of many students going overseas for higher education. They were often said to have unrealistic expectations and were being increasingly challenged by Nepalese home graduates, given there were increasing opportunities to study in Nepal.

The principal concern of education consultancies was to match students to countries, universities and courses in order to meet the educational expectations and budget of parents and sponsors, as well as the students themselves. This particularly applied to undergraduates. Postgraduate applicants were seen by consultancies as having more certainty of the possibilities available because of use of social media and Internet searches. The close connections between families and education consultancies, seen also in Theme 5, meant that there was a natural tendency to trust the decisions of the education consultant.

5.4.2.4 AT 4: Employment

As seen in Theme 1: Family, there was a strong belief that studying overseas was to be of positive benefit for employment and there was more certainty of careers for graduates with connections to family businesses. Although returning to the security of a family business, the response from participant MG 07 suggests that there were issues of self-confidence and pressure:

"In any organisation, regardless of whether it's your organisation or not they will test you. Can you do the job? Can he handle the pressure? The same in my company. I never go for a free ride. I go there every day and produce results."

Fortunately, participant FG 01 was able to join a management training programme in her bank. She anticipated that because of studying ‘outside’ (overseas) she should benefit from rapid promotion:

“I guess it’s got to be really good if you study abroad. I am a management trainee at a bank right now. If you want to come back and work in Nepal and you have a degree from outside then it is really good, like you’ll get promoted really fast.”

Whilst the overriding expectation of all graduates was that studying overseas would lead to improved career prospects and faster career development, this employer, referring to participant EMP 03, sounded this note of caution in referring to their likely progress:

“The problem here is they [the graduates] think they are experts. I tell them when you see the speedometer of a car you see the possibility of a high speed. But on the road, you should drive more slowly, 30-40kph. The problem is that these people (referring to returning graduates in their first employment) don’t want to be slow.”

He suggested that being unable to achieve rapid career progression led to returning graduates’ frustration. Whilst the outcomes of UK education might be favourable for some graduates, progress was not without some difficulties with respect to acculturation. Questioned as to how an overseas educated graduate was likely to be seen by existing managers, participant EMP 03 commented, *“It is an issue of change management. You should be slowly, slowly. But as I have said, these people don’t want to be slow”*.

Managing change in an organisation was one of the areas graduates suggested needed further attention in a business studies course. In exploring the differences between the experiences of UK educated Nepalese graduates and home educated Nepalese graduates, difficulties in managing cultural expectations are exposed. Notwithstanding any English language difficulties of Nepalese graduates, participant MG 01 highlighted how the newly acquired skills of UK educated Nepalese graduates differ from those of home

educated Nepalese graduates and how these competences could be used to the advantage of all parties:

“She got a job with a UK INGO. She had worked for them in the UK and they transferred her to Nepal. The two UK educated Nepalese graduates, unlike the Nepalese educated graduates, are prepared to argue with the British, saying, “Look it is no good you are doing that because they don’t want to do it. If they don’t want to do it, it’s never going to work. If you do what they want, they will co-operate with you.” But you will both be responsible if it doesn’t work.”

Within this associate theme, concern over sufficient graduate employment opportunities emerged at various points. Participant FG 03 suggests that having faith in oneself to do something different may be the only solution. This reinforces previously stated views seen in Theme 2 of the importance of developing or adding entrepreneurship to more courses or modules in the business studies curriculum:

“It all adds up to how this whole country is functioning at the moment. People are afraid to take risks, people are still willing to take nine to five jobs with no creativity or risk taking. You need to have that faith that you can do something different right from the beginning to be able to be that person when you grow up. That is ultimately going to change the whole country.”

5.4.3 Summary of Theme 3

In analysing this theme on ‘Expectations’, both anticipated and unfulfilled, there were many negative comments concerning the experience of graduates towards UK education which included the value of UK degrees themselves. It was found that this led to unrealised expectations from UK studies where the initial expectation had been to bring about improvements in the career trajectories of returning students.

‘Political Uncertainty’ was perceived to be a major issue influencing the expectations of graduates and employers. Political interference was also seen to be damaging to an individual’s employment prospects and a limitation on investment. In addition to disruption to studies through politically motivated strikes in both state schools and

universities, expectations for overseas tertiary education had also been built up because of some perceived weaknesses in Nepalese universities. One way of circumventing some of these problems was for students to have sought out courses offering skills in short supply in Nepal. These graduates were more likely to find employment enabling them to avoid many of the cultural issues identified from these findings that lead to graduate frustration.

5.5 Theme 4: Intrinsic Influences

5.5.1 Overview

This theme reveals the underlying intrinsic influences on the educational decisions made by graduates, parents and employers of Family Authority, Caste and Culture and Networking and Status. Savada (1991) recorded that:

“Nepal remained gripped in a feudalistic socioeconomic structure despite the influence of Western popular culture, growing commercialization, and some penetration of capitalism. The first challenge to this feudalistic power structure came in 1950-51, when the Rana autocracy was overthrown by the popular democratic movement that restored the authority of the monarchy.”

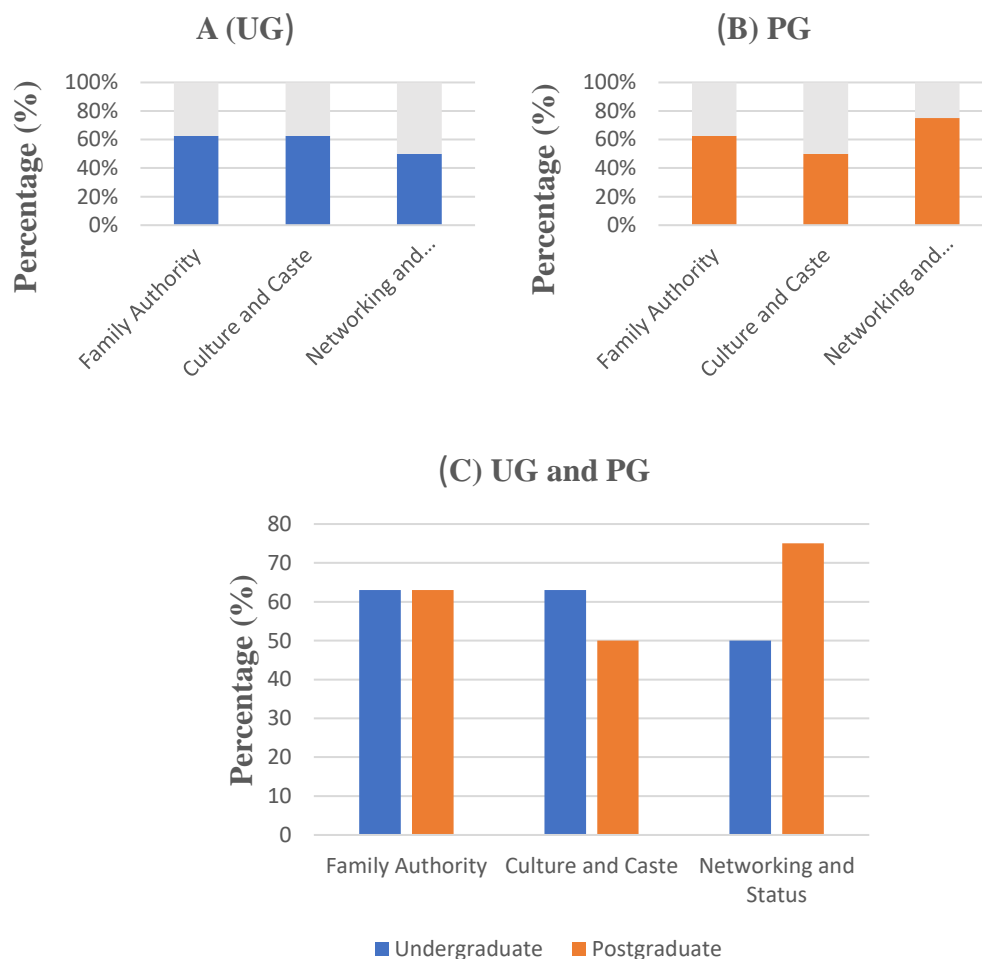
In discussing inherent issues of caste and culture, an employer, participant EMP 05 who is also a university professor, introduced the expression ‘surplus culture’, explaining that the term meant, “*exposure to cultures beyond those of traditional Nepal*”. He considered that while countries exhibiting a surplus culture were becoming more widespread in international economies, in Nepal this had not happened, “*because we are living in a condition of poverty and this poverty is still with us*”. This theme also reveals that the authority of the family influenced many of the decisions made by graduates evidencing the respect graduates still have for family. The theme also showed

that networking and status in Nepalese society was still very much a characteristic of a graduates' work-life balance.

5.5.2 Analysis of Associate Themes of Theme 4: Intrinsic Influences

Figure 12 shows the percentages of citations by undergraduates and postgraduates for each of the associate themes of Family Authority, Culture and Caste and Networking and Status.

Figure 12: Theme 4: Comparison of Undergraduate and Postgraduate citations



Number of respondents = 23.

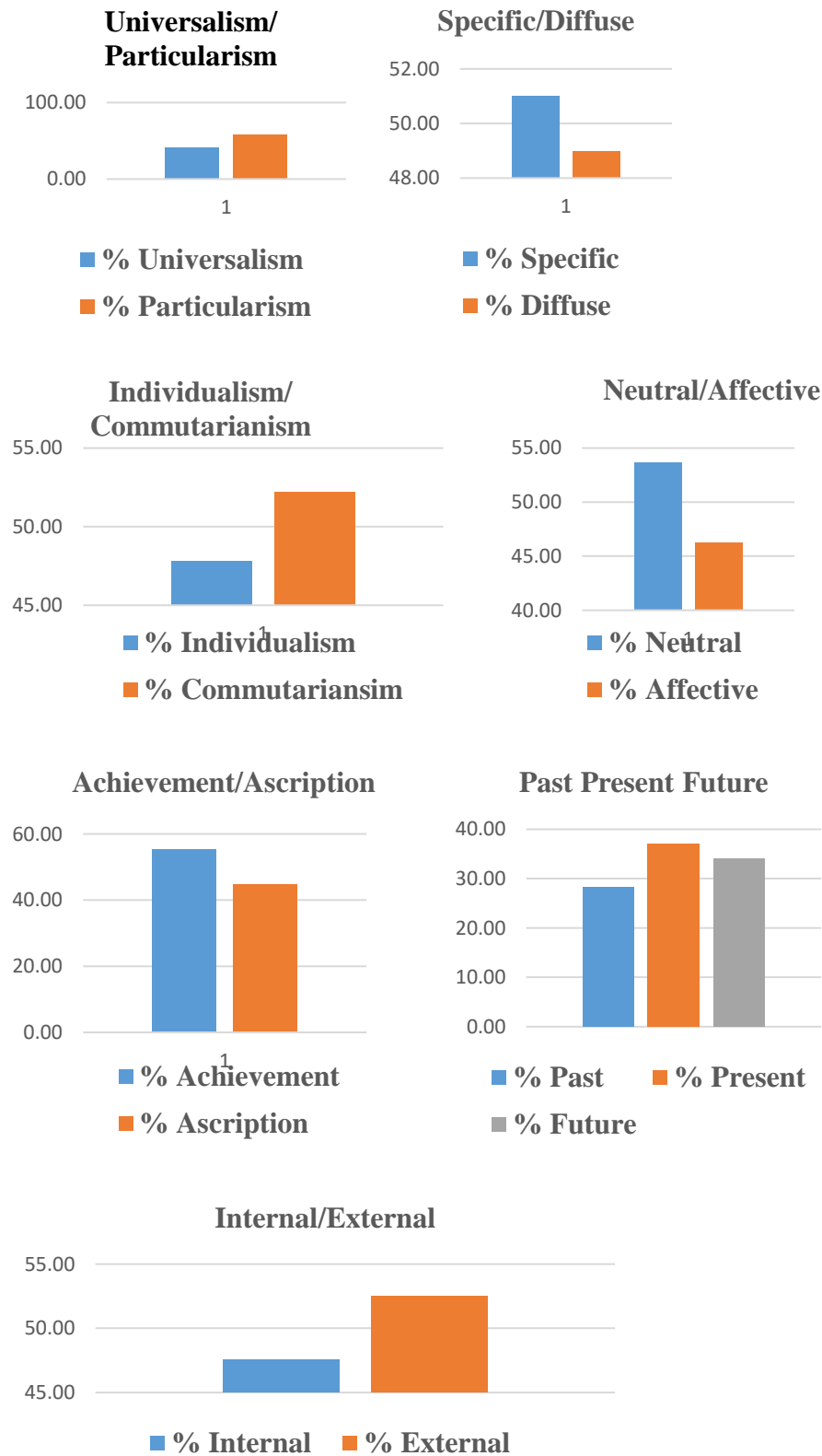
Source: Interview Data

The charts in Figure 12 show that undergraduates' awareness of the degree of influence of 'Culture' and 'Caste' exceeds that of postgraduates, whilst for postgraduates, 'Networking' and 'Status' were cited more frequently.

5.5.2.1 Results from the IAP questionnaire

Details were given in Chapter four of the online questionnaires that were completed to compile inter-cultural profiles of the graduates interviewed. These profiles are based on Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's 7-dimension model of culture. Figure13 shows the findings for each of the dimensions assessed.

Figure 13: Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner IAP Questionnaire Analysis (%'s)



Source: Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner IAP online questionnaire completed by 23 graduates

Figure 13 shows that the graduate have a stronger orientation towards the cultural dimensions of Particularism, Communitarianism, Neutral, Achievement, and Specific. Overall, 12 of the 23 graduates averaged scores above 50% on six of the seven dimensions.

In view of the wide range of scores, I decided that using median values, shown in Table 7, would further add to the discussion in Chapter six.

Table 7: Range and median values s for each of the 7 cultural dimensions

Cultural Dimension	Range	Median
Communitarianism/Individualism	10-90	66
Particularism/Universalism	29-84	62
Neutral/Affective	10--75	56
Achievement/Ascription	28-79	53.89
Specific/Diffuse	10-90	52
External/Internal	50=	50=
Past/Present/Future	Not available	27/38/33

Source: Feedback analysis from the IAP questionnaires n=23.

Table 7 shows that the highest of the seven scores were given to ‘Communitarianism’ and ‘Particularism’. There were equal mean values for External/Internal and no scores on the time dimensions of Past. Present and Future orientations above 50. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED, 2017b) defines Communitarianism as, “the connection between the individual and the community and Merriam-Webster (2017) defines particularism as, “the exclusive attachment to the interests of one group, class or, sect”. The findings from my research demonstrate the significance of these cultural

dimensions through citations allocated to associate themes. There is further discussion in Chapter six of the value of using Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's work in the conceptual framework of this thesis.

5.5.2.2 AT 1: Family Authority

In assessing the results from the IAP questionnaire, the concept of Particularism' was useful when explaining why loyalty to family and recognition of the influence of 'Family Authority' remained an important factor throughout Nepalese society. The findings provided by participant FG11 show how a graduate, after returning home from a UK business studies degree, finds fault with certain operational procedures in the family business. The implication from this interview was loyalty to family came before everything else.

"I come back and say it's not going to work. We need proper accounting systems. But the thing though is the business has been here for 15 years. People in the business have known us since we were tiny kids. Loyalty is the unique point of the business."

Working overseas can offer significant financial advantages to Nepalese graduates with UK qualifications and therefore it is seen as attractive to graduating students. Participant CON 01 demonstrates how family ties and respect to and for family and community came first by stating:

"If you're thinking in terms of money you can probably make more money outside but in Nepal you have more respect, more family ties which are very valuable to us. Even if you are earning 50% less, the respect you get from a lot of people (in Nepal) is 50% higher."

A UK business studies education is a stepping stone to a higher salary in Nepal. Participant MG 18 shows that a 'good degree' from the UK will not only be rewarded with a higher salary, but also allow one to maintain a beneficial position, providing further evidence of inherited respect. The idea that the graduate placed his Nepalese

residency above that of settling in, “another country” is introduced with the following rationale:

“I don’t want to be a second-class citizen in another country, by returning to Nepal I am established here. I wanted to get a good degree over there (in UK), that is recognised over here and will increase my salary here (in Nepal).”

Participant FG 09 acknowledges that change is happening ‘everywhere’ but accepts that family values and respect are (still) being passed down through the generations, for example; as the older sister she now receives respect from her younger sister.

“I think most young people around the world are the same. There is change everywhere. I think my parents are old fashioned. But we still have family values that have been going on for generations. For example, when we see an older person we give them respect. When my sister (7 years younger) sees me, she gives me respect.”

5.5.2.3 AT 2: Culture and Caste

As an introduction to the influence of culture and caste on educational decision-making, it was seen in one of the context interviews that there were very different views between the younger and older generations. Conversation went beyond the issue of what was described as ‘inter-religion’ or ‘inter-caste’ marriage to reconfirming that culture belonging to a ‘caste’ affected the way a person approached life and influenced educational decision-making.

The complexity of family relationships is explained by participant FG 03. In her opinion the restrictive nature of the prevailing family culture in Nepal was one of the reasons why students went abroad. Her conclusion alludes to the dilemma facing females - and her personally – ahead of her pending marriage as she has accepted that she has to live in her parent’s house until she was married.

“I know for a fact that the reason why they want to go abroad is also culture. In Nepal women are not allowed to live outside of their families until they get married. I’m getting married next February. But I still live in my parent’s house.”

I am earning my own money. I work 10-12 hours a day but I am still not allowed to live outside of my parent's house until I get married."

Other graduates interviewed were clear about the possibility of change, but less certain if this could be achieved. Participant MG 17 talks of "reality", referring to the enduring nature of the culture and caste system of Nepal.

"Caste system, yes. Sad to say, but yes. We are here in Kathmandu. But when you go to the villages they have certain cultures and things and it is very hard to change them. The caste system is very much here. Most of the people – teenagers and youngsters, follow the fashion. But when they follow fashions they forget what is their own background, their instinct, their personality. Some might have big problems later to understand what is the reality."

The notion of the 'reality' of caste was developed further by participant MG 07, who explained the original basis on which the caste system was developed, but concluded that the system was changing.

"Much before Nepal was a nation, the Newars were the original inhabitants of Kathmandu. I am a Newar. And we were traditionally artisans and people of commerce and culture. Like the Brahmins going more into politics. Overall I think it may still be there but it's rather changing."

A very different perspective was given when participant MG 22 illustrated his personal dilemma with respect to his own arranged marriage. His citation confirmed one of the principles of 'Particularism', namely the exclusive attachment to the interests of one group, class or, sect. (OED, 2017a). He offered that being an educated person should perhaps be the foundation of high caste, as a present-day alternative to the historical basis.

"Yes, I was not supposed to get married like this. I was a kind of rebel person. My father was not happy at all. They didn't allow me to go to work for 2 years, after I got married. I was not allowed to come to my home village because the social structure would not allow it. I was against this type of caste and tribe system although I was considered high caste. I thought this is ridiculous. We have to change the system. We should consider who is the educated person is the higher caste."

The Ghurkhas, over a period of several generations, have been regarded in Nepalese society as an elite group, rather than a specific caste, because of their close links to the British Army. One education consultant, participant CON 01 stated, *“The majority send their children to private schools and many overseas.”* This was as a result of their favourable financial position, *“They are paid in pounds”*. This can ensure a good education for their children in both Nepal and overseas. CON 01 added, *“The majority of the Ghurkha children are better educated than the majority of people who belong to the same groups or castes.”*

However, changes to the structure of Nepalese society are being proposed. In an earlier context interview, caste was seen to approximate with geographical area. In other interviews what is regarded as a controversial issue concerning the forced geographical relocation of ethnic groups was introduced. The first citation is from participant MG 01 who suggested that proposed changes to the treatment of ethnic groups by the Maoists - one of the parties in the Nepalese Government, had been met with opposition and there may yet be no certainty as to the direction the country will take.

“Nepal is still a tribal culture. But people did have a very good harmony as we lived together. But after the Maoist intervention Nepal had started to get more disharmony, more ethnic conflict but now people have started understanding that talking about one religion, one ethnicity is no good for this nation. That’s why we have started talking about multi ethnic states. Not the state based on ethnicity. The Maoists wanted the state based on ethnicity. But now many of the people say, no ethnic state (s). There should not be the domination of one ethnic state over the other. The concept is changing nowadays.”

More specifically, in one of the context interviews, participant CON 03 was similarly totally opposed to the forced removal of castes from one area to another and suggested there were political and historical reasons for these conversations taking place but concluded that, *“at least for the present - there was unlikely to be any change to the*

status quo. You cannot force people. I was born in Kathmandu. I cannot imagine living anywhere else”.

Although the personal aims and ambitions of graduating students were recognised by education consultancies, this was tempered by their awareness of the cultural barriers still evident in Nepalese society. This was especially the case for graduates who wished to return to Nepal from their overseas studies with neither the guarantee of employment in a family business, nor skills to fill vacancies in skill shortage areas.

Finally, the issue of shyness or the reserved nature of Nepalese students was commented upon by participant MG 01, “They are actually really shy... *pause very shy....*and reserved”. Respondents to my research suggested that in a business situation, talking directly to older people could be interpreted as being disrespectful. The starting point was said to be how children were raised and how they addressed an older generation, as participant FG 03 stated:

“I think there are two factors that contribute to a fear of being disrespectful. One is that in Nepal has been taught rights and wrongs from a very young age. From when the kids start to learn how to talk. He is taught to talk in a way that respects others. That language is like a symbol of how we are raised. Then automatically, subconsciously, we start thinking that someone is older even in an organisation or somewhere else, you have that fear of talking directly to them. You have the fear that you are being disrespectful. It’s more so in rural areas.”

In summarising this associate theme, the research supports findings in Chapter two, that whilst there is some evidence of attitudinal change in cities such as Kathmandu and Pokhara, in rural areas there are few signs of change in the attitudes held over many generations. The influence of family, family businesses and caste groups have been shown to be important influential factors in Nepalese society. Whilst there remain differences in caste orientation there is some evidence that the new generation are

beginning to see things differently. This was expressed as having one's own voice but this did not necessarily imply an immediate acceptance of societal change. GoNepal (2010, p. 1) concluded that the caste system was slowly being abandoned often because it was difficult to practice in modern society due to lack of time and development in educational, legal and social awareness.

Improving the confidence of Nepalese graduates through UK education was seen by participant FG 03 as a positive outcome of their business studies course as they explain:

“To get new experiences and knowledge and to get my confidence of spending our life by oneself. Because in Nepal we would never get that experience. We are always living with our family. Before I went there, there was not a single day I spent without them. Being apart from them. That's why they wanted me to get some confidence, before starting work (in Nepal)”.

5.5.2.4 AT 3: Networking and Status

The importance of networking, (otherwise referred to as connections in interviews, and status demonstrate that along with family background they influence employment. Participant FG 02 confirmed that, *“networking is very important here. If you want to get something done here, you get a lot of knowledge through connections with people.* Significantly given the scarcity of jobs in Nepal for graduates FG 02 stated, *“You can get jobs easily by networking”.*

The importance of family as a reference point for employment, in preference to that of the last employer, is explained by an employer, participant EMP 03, who confirms the special relationship between family and employment stating, *“It's not just connections but also family background. It matters a lot. I would know the family; the family would know someone else's family and that is how the network works.* He further suggested

that to obtain work in some high-profile job which had some recognition, *“You may need some references from your father or relatives. This person is my nephew”*.

From the analysis of the online IAP questionnaires, there was evidence (Table 7, p. 170) of the cultural dimension of ‘Ascription’ where power, title, and position matter and ensuing roles define behaviour. A doctor in one of the context interviews, participant CON 03, offered the view that status was previously attributed to different sectors of society. Today, money and wealth created by entrepreneurs conferred status and that some professional occupations, including being a teacher, no longer did so.

“Years ago, a teacher was in a high-status position, highly regarded. Now that’s no longer the case. Now some people think entrepreneurs, people who have made the money who had no social standing before, but now because they made the money. They are about selfishness, individualism, although you might give some back to society.”

In reviewing this associate theme, trust was synonymous to status. Participant CON 03 gives a specific example of the permanency of Nepalese status and culture, suggesting that Nepal was different to the UK. They developed a scenario illustrating the differences in outcomes between the UK and Nepal.

“We were walking one day in the UK and there was a convenience store close by to where he lived. I asked: If you forgot your wallet one day, would the shop keeper give you something on credit, pay him tomorrow? No, I have to pay if I buy something.

I said in my country (Nepal), if I forget my wallet, I can go around buy anything I want, I can eat in a good restaurant, come back home. No one is going to ask me for money. That’s why I don’t want to live there (overseas). That’s the kind of status, culture we have here in this country.”

5.5.3 Summary of Theme 4

In this theme of Intrinsic Influences, there is evidence that Nepal is still operating within the traditions and influences of a caste society. Business is essentially built around

family loyalty. Although a new constitution was promulgated in 2015, at the time this primary research was carried out, there was no finalisation of the new constitution and any changes to the structure of Nepalese society are likely to be met with some resistance.

A conclusion reached from the interviews is that whilst there is some evidence of changing attitudes, especially amongst younger people, this was mainly discussed in the context of inter-caste marriages and, for some, the way a person approaches their life should be respected. The findings attributed to this theme show all three associate themes address influences on educational decision-making as well as confirming that culture and caste, and especially the authority of the family, have an important part to play in a graduate's decision to return home for employment after studying in the UK.

5.6 Theme 5: Extrinsic Influences

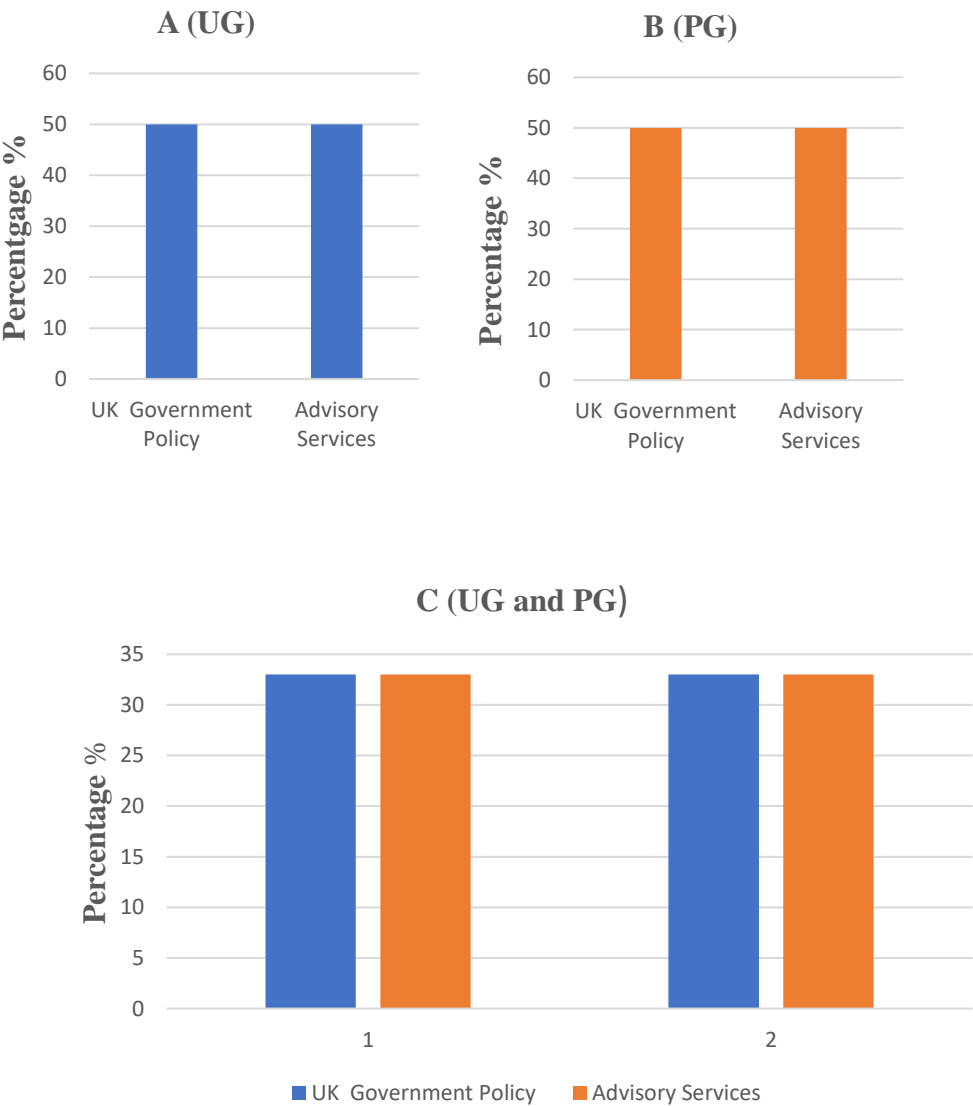
5.6.1 Overview

The four previous themes of Family, the UK and Nepalese Curriculum and Employment, Expectations and Intrinsic Influences such as culture and class have explored the influence on educational decision-making. Two concerns emerged from the findings and are analysed through the two associate themes of this final theme. These include the UK Government's withdrawal of the two-year post-study work visa from April 2012 (UK Visa Bureau 2017) and the introduction of the Highly-Trusted Sponsor status (HTS) licence from November 2013 (Gov.uk, 2017). All graduates had obtained study visas under a previous system before the introduction of the HTS scheme.

Whilst it had been possible for five of the twenty-three graduates interviewed to apply for the, now cancelled two-year post-study work visa, none had taken advantage of scheme. All graduates interviewed had made the decision to return home before they had started studying in the UK. No graduate had considered or taken advantage of the less advantageous one-year Tier 1 (Gov.uk, 2017b) or Tier 2 post-study work visa (Gov.uk, 2017c). Comments from graduates therefore relate to their assessment of the likely implications of changes to post-study visa rules. As seen through the associate themes, educational consultancies and employers are already reacting negatively to the new UK Government post-study visa policy

Although education consultancies had no direct responsibility for assisting graduates in finding jobs should they return to Nepal, they were acutely aware that both parents and graduates wished to maximise career opportunities and often linked this to the availability of internships and/or post- graduation work experience. These extrinsic influences area also explored through the two associate themes of UK Government policy including visa policy and British Council Chevening scholarships (2015) and secondly, of Advisory Services offered by private education consultancies and through the British Council in Nepal. Figure 14 shows the number of instances graduates cited these associate themes in interviews.

Figure 14: Theme 5: Comparison of Undergraduate and Postgraduate citations



Number of respondents = 23.

Source: Interview Data

The results in Chart C shows that the percentages of mentions by undergraduates and postgraduates for this theme were similar their assessment of the two associate themes.

5.6.2 Analysis of Associate Themes

5.6.2.1 AT 1: Government Policy (Visas and British Council Scholarships)

5.6.2.1.1 Visas

Obtaining work experience through a two-year post-study work visa gave international (non-EU) postgraduates who had studied in the UK an opportunity to gain work experience before returning home. Its withdrawal is seen in these findings to have affected the UK's attractiveness to students, employers and had business implications for those education consultancies focused towards the UK. Countries including Australia and the United States, noted in Chapter two, have maintained similar schemes for graduating international students.

With respect to the HTS licensing scheme, it is explained by Workpermit.com (2017) that:

“The HTS scheme lists institutions licensed to sponsor migrant students under a Tier 4 licence. Tier 4 student visas allow people from outside of the European Economic Area to enter the UK as a student, usually either at a school, college, or university. The option to enter the UK on a (previous) ‘Prospective Student Visa’ ended in October 2013.”

In Chapter six there is further discussion of the implications of these changes to UK visa policy.

5.6.2.1.2 Scholarships

The limited availability of UK Government funded scholarships through the British Council Chevening Scholarship (2017) scheme was also raised by graduates and education consultancies. The award, “is aimed at developing global leaders (2017, p.

1)”. This employer participant EMP 02 suggested, *“There are consulate offices like the British Council, Chevening Awards for a few, two or three per year.”* It was established later from the Chevening Awards officer for South Asia at BERA, 2016 that 25 Nepalese students, and (not two or three) had been given Chevening scholarships in 2015

Participant graduate FG 11 was skeptical about the chances of winning a Chevening Scholarship, *“If you are not from a Commonwealth country, you are unlikely to get a scholarship”*.

Many of the graduates interviewed were from families able to fully finance overseas studies, with this participant employer EMP 02, stating:

“There are high class families for whom the money is nothing. These are the children of families with a very nice background. They go to boarding schools in India or private secondary schools in Nepal. They have that foundation. They approach them, pass the tests and they can pay whatever is asked.”

In the following example, participant FG 03 realised her ambition of not requiring additional funding from her parents. As an undergraduate she had excelled in her studies in the Netherlands and was awarded a scholarship to continue at postgraduate level. It was suggested that she could study on a dual degree programme in the UK and the Netherlands. This led to her taking an independent studies programme in the UK and the Netherlands, organised between a UK and her Dutch university. In the UK, the programme included work experience in a UK INGO. She received a Master degree from both universities and at the time of her interview was working for the UK INGO in Nepal.

“I studied with about seven professors and chose five subjects. Intercultural management, accounting, international marketing, international business and international relations.”

Participant FG 11 explains that for many students India remains an attractive country for studies. It has a similar culture to Nepal and offers significant cost savings. She also notes the financial advantage the Ghurkhas have over others in Nepal leading to her comment on the availability of US scholarships.

“UK gets its appeal from the Ghurkha’s always having their children there. But people who don’t have that connection see the US as a much bigger hub, because they have scholarships, green card. Scholarship for the US is the big thing, for UK very rare.”

5.6.2.2 AT 2: Advisory Services and the British Council

5.6.2.2.1 Education consultancies

Interviews with graduates revealed that before admission to a UK university only one participant had consulted the British Council in Nepal for information on UK universities and/or courses. All other graduates had applied through an education consultancy. Although the term ‘agent’ is more frequently used to describe individuals or organisations who work on a commission or fee basis when recruiting students for schools or universities, for my research I chose to use the term ‘education consultancies’. Education consultancies in Nepal offer strategic advice and create solutions for parents who build up trust over many years through close social networks, a feature of Hindu society. From the education consultant’s viewpoint, the expectations of many parents were often developed from their own personal experience of UK education. This experience acted as a catalyst for transposing their aspirations to their children. Their intention was to realise these aspirations by securing an appropriate university offer through an education consultancy with the right connections.

However, as the number of potential students for overseas study has increased, the market for placing students into universities was said to have become more competitive. Less favourable UK Government policies towards obtaining post-work study visas has meant that to protect their income and business, consultancies had sought out new university clients in countries where this was still an option.

One of the longest established education consultancies in Nepal who had started their business to represent UK universities long before the creation of ‘new’ universities (or post-1992 universities) and the introduction of the HTS scheme, had developed good connections with families and secondary schools in Nepal. The families this consultant had represented over many years were not familiar with the post-1992 universities, relying even more on their consultant for advice. This consultant, participant EC 02 had now decided to represent a full range of UK universities.

“Before only the high caste people, the genuine students used to go to the UK for their education. They could afford it and could meet the English language entry requirements of IELTS.”

The consultancies interviewed were working on a commission-only basis from client universities, although participant EC 01 reported that some UK universities which, *“did not use agents”* had recently changed their policy and were now using them to increase recruitment. Participant EC 01 explained:

“I am known in Nepal for representing the higher end universities in the UK. (We) represents the top 25 universities listed in the Education Guardian or the Times ranking. I like to represent universities which are much higher in ranking because my students and the network of students that I have are coming from upper middle-class family backgrounds and can afford it.”

It was normal for the parent who engaged a consultant to ask for help with decisions on country, university and course. The reputation of individual universities together with

attitudes, and perceptions of a country's attitude towards overseas students influenced their advice to parents and students.

The services expected by parent and students varied considerably with participant FG 03 noting, *"Those who know what they want search web sites. That's a smaller group."* Whereas those graduates without the qualifications who want to go to *better places*" consulted agencies *"who take money off them."*

Given that the requirement of all students was to meet a minimum English language standard before admission, the majority had studied through the British Council for an IELTS certificate. The IELTS test is designed to assess English language ability of candidates who are studying for admissions to UK degree courses (IELTS, 2017).

In response to questions about choice of universities and courses, this consultant, participant EC 01, first addresses the lack of advice given in Nepalese schools before explaining their own business positioning strategy. Rankings and awareness of the social background and income level of client families was key to their business, *"We don't have higher education counselling in schools."* This lack of counselling meant there was generally no guidance given, *"Like, in which country, which university, there will be good courses. What courses and what kind of career choices."*

The education consultancies interviewed stated that many parents and students were totally confused as to what to do which led to participant EC 02 stating, *"It is me having to guide the student, asking what is their interest what do they want to do in life?"*. Her approach was to study their school leaving report before giving advice, *"Oh you got an A here maybe you can do that."* There was agreement that students wanting to study for

a Master's degree were, "*much more mature. They know what they want in life after they have done their Bachelors.*" Their own research led to participant EC 01 confirming a student's ability to conduct their own search, "*Ma'am I want to go to X for Bio Technology or Climate Change, or MBA or courses like that.*"

Before changes to the UK's visa scheme with its tighter policies over admissions arising from the introduction of the Tier 4 (HTS scheme) (Gov.uk, 2017d), study visas were readily available. This encouraged many private colleges to be set up in the UK, many of which were owned by non-UK nationals, include some Nepalese. They were supported by recruitment agencies worldwide and according to participant EC 02, were making, "*very good money*" The graduates recognised that education consultancies were essentially profit-making businesses but their services were seen as adding significant value to their decision-making process and, as previously seen over time, education consultants had developed close social links with families.

Participant MG 07 was aware of possible 'fraud' in large cities stating, "*Kathmandu is like any large city in the world. London, like any large city has its fair share of scams.*"

These changes to visa policy meant that those education consultancies relying on private colleges in the UK were looking to new opportunities in countries other than the UK to maintain a viable business. The development of private colleges offering degree programmes had encouraged students to apply who would previously have been able to afford regular UK university international student fees. They typically used the services offered by consultancies to obtain offers from colleges and to arrange for visas and make travel and accommodation arrangements. The more widespread availability of degree opportunities also gave opportunities for dependents to accompany them. Parents were

not always able to differentiate between universities as all were said to be offering UK degrees. As participant EC 02 stated:

“This (availability of places to study for a UK degree in private colleges) was because not many Nepalese can afford tuition fees at the XXX University or YYY University, £13 or £14,000, unlike the colleges, which were previously charging £6 or £7,000. Consequently, the quantity of undergraduate students I sent to the more expensive universities reduced.”

Frequent changes to the UK’s HTS scheme resulted in the closure of many of these private colleges. Before these closures, Singapore had, from 2007, also closed many private colleges. According to participant EC 02, these colleges attracted Nepalese students, *“who wanted to get out of the country under any conditions.”* This led to significant changes in the work and positioning of individual educational consultancies. One of the consultants interviewed claimed there were still over 1,000 education consultancies in Kathmandu alone focusing on low cost opportunities for students to gain UK degrees.

In interviews with education consultants, the changes to UK visa policy and closure of private colleges were said to have significantly affected both the reputation of UK education and their own credibility. As participant EC 01 stated\;

“Good agents like us also suffered. From 2007 to 2010 I think I did very well in sending students to the UK. By 2008 at least 60 students or something like that. Unfortunately, I think mid-2010/11 the UK Government clamped down on student visas.”

Participant EC 01 recognised that changes in UK Government visa policies and increasing tuition fees necessitated a change to the business models of education consultancies. Her loyalty to selected UK universities had built up over many years and to maintain this relationship she needed for more detailed knowledge of the courses and employment opportunities that might be available from studying with them:

“I don’t want to represent X or Y universities that don’t work with agents, but universities like X or Y because they do work with agents.”

Working with and through the British Council was seen, except for IELTS testing, to have prevented problems for both educational consultancies and students. As stated by participant FG 06, *“Prior to going to the UK, I’d never been to the British Council. I knew they do IELTS.”*

5.6.2.2.2 British Council services (in Kathmandu)

Only education consultancies trained and approved by the British Council are included in my research (British Council, 2017). Participant FG 06 acknowledges the positive role of UK university representatives who attend fairs organised by the British Council. She welcomed involvement in supporting her UK university as an alumnus at British Council fairs saying, *“I thought OK, let’s do it for fun. I’ve been with him for 2 or 3 times he has come to Nepal for fairs.”* However, she describes what she sees as a main motivating factor for some students in attending fairs commenting, *“They are not bothered where they are going. They just have to go to the UK.”*

At the time of these interviews the general view of education consultant, participant EC 02, towards the British Council in Kathmandu was less than complimentary, *“There is no help in getting students from the British Council (laughter).* Their awareness of educational consultancies of the newer universities established more recently was limited as well as the number of Nepalese students studying in the UK and at which universities. Educational consultancies were also critical about the level of support received from the British Council on course information and availability of Chevening scholarships and scholarships offered by UK universities.

The information they considered useful is explained further by participant EC 01:

“I now hear one University has increased the number of Nepalese students, but is this with or without scholarships? This kind of information agents need to know. The quality of students required and where can they afford to go. There are University programmes, where the students who get the highest grade in A’ levels (in Nepal) get offered scholarships. It would be helpful if we could guide these students to one of the best universities. We don’t get to know about these high A’ level students.”

An exception to the general criticism was made with regards to the advice to them from the British Council with respect to changes to visa policy. Participant EC 01 explains:

“I take part in the British Council Fairs. I really have sent 100 plus students to the UK. It is a huge boom for the (UK) economy. There is no effective support here. If I ask a small question they wouldn’t know. I visit the website, read the documents. Except when there was a change in visa policy they sent experts here and gave me a presentation which is good to explain to agents when the visa policy was to be introduced.”

Educational consultancies were asked how the brand ‘UK Education’ could help secure employment opportunities for students from a developing economy such as Nepal. Their views were summed up by participant EC 01, *“It would be nice if once a year they invited all the agents that promote the UK to a get together and get to know each other.”* My meeting with the British Council confirmed that much of the information educational consultancies were seeking was readily available from published sources such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2017).

From interviewing graduates, it was found there was general awareness of The British Council in Kathmandu, but often only as an IELTS testing centre. Those who were aware of the British Council were critical of the paucity of detailed information. This is evidenced by participant MG 18 who refers to their agent also needing to know.

“I went to the British Council. Library fine for language training - fine. But all they can say is that these universities do it. [a particular course]. They have poor information systems on universities for applicants. Which are the top places? What are the benefits of each university? Agents need to know this. Students need to know.”

5.6.4. Summary of Theme 5

For parents and students with little personal experience of overseas education, this theme shows the influential and often decisive role which educational consultancies can play in advising students and their families. For the increasing numbers of students seeking an overseas education, access to this kind of advice is important. Even if graduates were returning home with assured futures, the close personal connections with consultants was valued to assist in obtaining visas and entry to their preferred university.

The main reasons given by graduates for using an agent's services were lack of advisory services in schools, awareness of visa rules and opportunities emerging in the newer UK universities that were unfamiliar to students and their parents. Changes to UK visa policy, the closure of many lower cost private colleges in the UK and higher tuition fees of UK universities necessitated many education consultancies broadening their client base. In addition, countries around the region, such as Thailand, are now introducing degrees taught in English which are often offered at a lower cost than comparable courses in the UK.

5.7 Conclusion to Chapter Five

The development of five themes and connections to and between associate themes has enabled a deeper understanding of the decision-making processes of graduates. The inclusion of numerical data has given further insight into the differing views of undergraduates and postgraduates, although in some cases views were remarkably consistent. Many of the findings reinforce the decision to undertake context interviews ahead of the main interviewing schedule, including evidence of the continuing and

traditional cultural roles in Nepalese society. Twenty of the twenty-three graduates interviewed were from the Brahmin caste, the highest caste in Hindu society and associated more with education, and careers in professions, including teaching. The remaining three were graduates from the Newar caste working in business and starting up new enterprises. The Newar caste traditionally lived, worked and traded from the Kathmandu valley. Throughout the chapter the findings have focused on the lack of employment opportunities in Nepal. Whilst this has come about partially through conflict and, as seen in Chapter two the geography of Nepal that has limited, for example, Foreign Direct Investment, the conclusion reached by participant MG 12 summarises not only the chapter but reflects an aim of my research.

“Giving them a job is important. Most people would come back if they had a job here. They stay away for the money. They don’t have the confidence right now that you can actually do something right now.”

Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter revisits the research questions (see p.10) and addresses them by drawing upon the analysis of findings in Chapter five. The research questions consider the influences, expectations and reflections of Nepalese graduates on their UK studies. It discusses how satisfied Nepalese graduates are with their employment in Nepal together with the views of their employers towards UK educated business studies graduates. It concludes with the implications for UK business studies course design and delivery. The discussion opens with a review of previous literature identifying gaps in the knowledge on educational decision-making. It then discusses the applicability of the conceptual framework used.

Previous studies, referenced in the literature review consider the influences on educational decision-making from several different perspectives. These include the work of Hemsley-Brown and Foskett, (2001), Mazzarol and Souter (2002), Bodycott (2009) and Rounsaville (2011). No published studies were found relating to the experiences of Nepalese graduates and, “Students’ own perspectives on their motivations, objectives and experiences are sorely lacking.” (Brooks and Waters, 2013, p. 2).

The work of Rounsaville (2011) found there was a gap in knowledge concerning the theoretical frameworks applied to the educational decision-making of international students, her approach explored the use of capital theory, (Bourdieu, 1986). Hemsley-Brown and Foskett, (2001) presented what they described as an integrated and coherent

overview of choice and decision-making in educational markets. Whilst they developed a comprehensive model they were critical of research which focused on individual factors, suggesting any such contribution was only a partial answer. Shields observed that Nepalese Government policies on education had, “marginalised many linguistic and religious minorities” (2013, p. 19).

Mazzarol and Souter (2002) relied on factors pushing or pulling students towards studying abroad. They attributed the students’ demand for studying abroad to either raising their expectations of economic and social status or, in less developed economies, limited access to higher education in their own countries. It was shown in Chapter five that whilst the positive expectations from studying in the UK are similar to those found in the work of Mazzarol and Souter (*op. cit.*), concerns have been raised over the quality of Nepalese education and subject choices which are more limited. Bodycott (2009) from his research amongst Chinese students and parents, recommended that more attention should to be paid to cultural values in educational decision-making, concluding, “Choices of a preferred destination [for overseas study] were found to be influenced more by factors grounded in cultural, political and socio-economic pragmatism.” (p. 369).

My research introduced intercultural profiling awareness (IAP) into the analysis of the findings using questionnaires supplied by the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Organisation. The findings from these questionnaires confirmed that for Nepalese graduates who returned home from a business studies course in a UK university, “cultural differences affect the process of doing business and managing” (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p. 1). The Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner analysis

suggests that a graduate with ‘Achievement’ as their principal cultural orientation may appear to their employer to be threatening the stability of the organisation. There is further assessment in Chapter seven of the potential value of using the work of Bronfenbrenner and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s in gaining a greater depth of understanding of educational decision-making. The recommendations and conclusion in Chapter seven will confirm how using this new approach has made important contributions to the existing knowledge.

Previous research studies suggest that much of the extant research was not sufficiently comprehensive of the whole picture. There is an important addition to knowledge in that educational decision-making, analysed through this development of conceptual framework, can now be understood as a series of linkages between themes and associate themes, evidenced through a multifactorial, cultural and historically based process. This agrees with a similar conclusion reached by Fouad (2007, p. 544) who noted:

“Lives unfold in multidimensional ways, and careers are seen not so much as a choice made in early life, but rather as ‘a series of choices or forced transitions that individuals make over a lifespan. Transitions are strongly influenced by the resources the individual can draw on.”

Increasing opportunities for Nepalese students to study in higher education in Nepal were acknowledged in Chapter five. However, graduates believed, as was the experience of many parents, that UK education offered a greater choice of courses and gave rise to more employment opportunities and faster career progression. They hoped for the same outcome on their return to Nepal from the UK. Twenty-one of the twenty-three graduates had attended private secondary schools which focus on meeting UK university admission criteria by teaching in English and offering subjects that give students access to courses not generally available in Nepalese state universities. Hence,

the curriculum studied at private Nepalese schools enables students to gain more offers for admission to UK universities.

In Chapter five, it was shown how teaching methods differ in UK education from those in Nepal. One graduate, participant FG 06 noted, “*Here [in Nepal] everything is rote learning*”, whereas in UK, graduate participant FG 12 commented, “*Everything is a learning experience*”. These findings add to Shields’ (2013) view of the Hindus’ highly developed approach to education for their children. This was also seen in the overview in Chapter one that “Vidya or education is the means by which an individual can gain right knowledge, control his desires and learn to perform his obligatory duties” (Jayaram, 2016, p. 1.).

Loyalty to family was seen amongst graduates interviewed to have been a major force in their motivation to return home. It was shown by Mahat and Scoloveno (2006, p. 35) that, “In the family-oriented Nepalese culture, children respect and value their elders’ opinions”. Graduate and employer transcripts point to the family structure of organisations and connections with family members as being one of the most important factors in the selection of employees. This is a different conclusion to the one reached in a report for the UK Chartered Institute of Personnel Development explaining that, “employability is acquired through matching knowledge and competencies with employer demands” (CIPD 2016, p. 5). Clarke and Patrickson previously recorded that, “employers are focused on ‘functional’ employability – matching individual characteristics with business needs” (2008, p. 121).

In addition to family, educational infrastructure developments were shown in literature by Shields (2013), to be important to the understanding of educational decision-making

in Nepal. Shields (op. cit.) noted in his case studies of Nepal (and Zambia), that expansion of education and development of the country were linked. In the findings in Chapter five, employers and graduates confirmed that they were aware of successful improvements in all sectors of Nepalese state education but political instability and questions over the quality of Nepalese education are leading many families to choose private education for their children.

6.2. Discussion of research questions

6.2.1 Research question 1:

What initially influenced the decisions of Nepalese graduates to study in the UK?

Parental support and encouragement were the major influences on the decision-making of Nepalese graduates. Parents, many of whom had experienced UK education themselves, had high expectations of UK education for their children. Using the push-pull analogy, Mazzarol and Soutar, (2002) argue that the process used by parents was essentially one of ‘pushing children’ towards a UK education. The view of parents was that their own participation in UK education led them to the view that graduates would reap the benefits through successful careers in either family or non-family businesses. Graduates also expected these benefits from UK education but they were additionally motivated by dreams of new experiences and more personal independence. Writing on social system structures of Nepal, Savada (1991) noted that religious values were integrated with family values within Hindu society and confirmed that in the early 1990s Nepal was the only constitutionally declared Hindu state in the world. There was, however, a great deal of intermingling of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs. Savada explained,

“that the basic social unit in Nepal was a family consisting of a Patri-lineally extended household. Beyond the immediate family, there existed a larger kinship network” (1991, p. 2).

Unfortunately, the advantages of a UK education were often offset by the frustration graduates experienced on courses and limited employment opportunities on their return to Nepal. The magnitude of their frustration became more evident when they gave as one of their reasons for their return to Nepal, the resumption of a way of life which was preferable to the one experienced directly or observed in others living and working in the UK. This was also seen in a conclusion by Bronfenbrenner, (1979, p. 232) who states:

“In some instances, old settings are not abandoned for the new, but continue to be frequented so that the network expands with ever greater possibilities of interconnections. The most stable and enduring base throughout this process, current divorce rates notwithstanding, remains the family.”

The ongoing influence and involvement of family and extended family in educational decision-making was seen in conversations discussing the importance of connections to family in the UK. Their support was judged as more valuable to undergraduates than postgraduates when making the decision to study in the UK. Enabling undergraduates to gain knowledge was the primary concern of parents. The priority for postgraduates was for developing and enhancing skills for employment.

The influence of networking and maintaining personal and family status in Nepalese society was also important when making decisions about where and what to study. This was reflected in conversations that emerged about caste status and family expectations. There was an almost automatic assumption that a graduate with a family business background would return to the business and eventually assume full responsibility.

Graduates without access to family businesses or opportunities for employment through networks were seen by other graduates and employers to be positively disadvantaged. These attitudes were seen in the findings of Chapter five to have come from the tradition of trust in, and loyalty to, family members.

Although most graduates interviewed were from higher social classes, with parents able to fully or partly finance their studies in the UK, education consultants commented that social class may not always be the determinant of financial prowess. In circumstances where the family was unable to fully finance an overseas education, the extended family came together ensuring sufficient financial support was available. Funding was given in anticipation that an overseas education would help towards securing the future of the family in its entirety as participant MG 18 stated, *“Staying in the extended family. And when you grow old, their sons take care of them”*. Those graduates studying in the UK who became unable to fully finance their studies usually returned home, their hopes and aspirations dashed. The engagement with family influenced the decisions made from infancy right through to adult working life.

There was some mention in the interviews of younger people in Nepal who live in urban or city areas, but not those in the rural or country areas, being more flexible towards historical, caste and religious rites and traditions. Arranged marriages between castes were given as an example of where graduates had not followed these traditions but, in such a circumstance, the findings showed that these graduates may be disowned by family, reflecting the view that there was, “a reversion to Hindu roots.” Fouad, 2007, p. 543. The thesis also adds to the work of Aldrich and Cliff (2003) who suggest that an embedded family perspective acknowledges that people are, “part of networks of social

relations”, and “particularly important in the context of ethnic minority enterprise” (p. 575).

The extent to which these views applied to employment situations in Nepal were tested in this thesis and developed from the work of Trompenaars and Wooliams (2005, p. 1):

“We have argued consistently that culture is not simply another variable to be ‘bolted on’, but that it provides the whole contextual environment defining much of the essence of the relationship between an organization and the environment in which it operates.”

A major stimulus in deciding to study in the UK came from weaknesses in the Nepalese education system. Whilst credit was given by all participants to the improvements in Nepalese state education, it has led to increased numbers of students seeking an overseas education as well as more home educated Nepalese graduates applying for jobs in the local employment market where there was a paucity of opportunities.

Until changes were made in UK visa requirements including the introduction of the HTS scheme (outlined in Chapter five), students from lower income families had often accepted offers from less expensive private colleges that were accredited by UK universities to offer their degrees. There were suggestions in the preliminary context interviews that these colleges had often attracted poor quality students with poor motivation for studies and their objective was simply a desire to leave Nepal.

The closure of over 400 private colleges (Pie News, 2017), many of which were offering UK degrees, was welcomed by education consultancies and employers and seen as necessary to assure the quality of UK education. The action had caused some fundamental questioning by employers and parents as to the ongoing integrity and

intrinsic value of UK education. However, a consequence of their closure was financial hardship for many Nepalese families.

At the time of writing this thesis political uncertainty had become almost endemic in Nepal following the ten-year civil war. There was still no agreement between political parties on a new constitution and the influence of this situation on educational decision-making was evident in the interviews. It was referred to by both employers and education consultancies as a factor inhibiting the growth of state education. The consequences of the failure to resolve the issue of political uncertainty were seen in a report from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2014) although they suggest that its influence would diminish over time. The ILO report (op. cit.) also confirmed that resolution of the political impasse should lead to greater employment.

A major influence on the decision to study in the UK was seen in Theme 3, where evidence was given for classifying political uncertainty as a chronosystem effecting the decision-making processes of Nepalese graduates. The chronosystem is the fifth and latest system to be added to Bronfenbrenner's model.

Although extrinsic factors such as the cancellation of the UK's two-year post-study work visa and quality issues in UK private colleges have affected the UK's reputation for higher education, the reputation of individual universities may be as, or more important than the reputation of UK education itself, as participant MG 03 states:

“The reason why my friend who went to X university, and me to Y university, was not because they were in the UK but because of their reputations.”

Twenty-one of the twenty-three graduates interviewed had received advice from their educational consultancy. The relationships between parents and educational consultancies was personal and their influence was becoming even more important. The

shortage of graduate jobs in Nepal was a major influence on where and what to study, together with consultants' advice on clarifying the status and offers from post-1992 and more recently established UK universities. The criticism from both education consultancies and employers was the lack of information from UK universities with respect to career openings leading from specific courses, attributed to a general lack of awareness of the employment situation in Nepal.

Employers were clear about vacancies resulting from skills shortages in areas such as accountancy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Both graduates and employers also emphasised the need for more awareness of, and new courses in entrepreneurship as a means of stimulating national development and employment. Naudé argues that, "entrepreneurship does contribute to development by fostering structural change and growth and acting as a vehicle for people to escape from poverty and inequality" (2010, p. 13). The development of entrepreneurial skills was also an area which employers considered could be improved both in Nepalese as well as UK universities.

The interconnectedness between themes became apparent early in the analysis of familial links. Awareness from the analysis of these links was useful in helping to explain why the expressed desire for more personal independence by graduates may be subjugated by loyalty to family. Returning to Nepal was said to result in a more amenable work-life balance than the one experienced when working part-time as a student, or observed from the hours worked by relatives in the UK.

Confirmation of the relevance of the claims made that, "The global education market draws on the fantasies, dreams and desires of its customers" (Sidhu, 2006, p. 303) comes

from participant FG 01 who stated that her parents and grandparents recommended that she go to the UK rather than the US as, *“Academically the UK is the stronger educational system”*.

The discussion around Research Question 1 clearly shows the influence of family in educational decisions to study in the UK. The balance that graduates make between loyalty to family by returning to Nepal shows the compromise they are willing to make between dreaming of new experiences, ambition and personal independence.

6.2.2 Research question 2:

What preconceptions and post-graduation reflections on UK business studies did Nepalese graduates have?

In supporting the recommendations from the QAA (2013), it was shown that a major success for UK education was the organisation and management of courses in UK universities. Graduates' expectations were met with respect to adhering to semester dates, timetables and submissions dates for assignments. Nepalese students commented favourably on implementation of policies to reduce plagiarism.

There was an overall expectation from graduates, parents, employers and education consultancies that UK education would be of the highest quality. The environment in Nepal in which the graduates interviewed had grown up exposed them to a wide range of cultures from social media, television and film. A major expectation for many of the graduates interviewed, expressed by participant FG 01, was that graduates wanted to study overseas to *“gain some exposure to and get to know the culture”* and what being abroad *“is like”*. Their expectation of gaining new knowledge and experience was

recognised by the parents and, as evidenced by the statement from participant FG 13 was a way of gaining self-confidence, a need also identified by the family:

“In Nepal, we would never get that experience because we are always living with our family. Being apart from them, that’s why they wanted me to get some confidence to start working. I now have lots of confidence that I can do something back in my own country.”

Participant FG 01 also talked about the confidence that can develop from the experience of being on a UK course:

“You are given a lot of confidence just by being in that country. It’s a developed nation and it boosts up your confidence when you come back. You can speak better than any other person who is educated only in Nepal because they have not been exposed to that experience.”

Shyness in Nepalese students studying on UK business studies courses has been noted and this employer, participant EMP 05, suggested, when discussing issues of caste and culture, that poverty had prevented exposure to other cultures becoming possible in Nepal, *“because we are living in a condition of poverty and this poverty is still with us”*.

In Chapter five, positive and negative expectations were identified. Many of the positive expectations of graduates confirmed their acceptance of the advice of parents and family that studying in the UK would result in enhanced employment opportunities. The advantages for employment were of greater significance to postgraduates, who having developed knowledge during undergraduate studies, were more concerned about securing work experience that led to full-time employment. Although enabling undergraduates to gain knowledge was seen in Research Question 1 as the primary concern of parents, the cancellation of the UK’s two-year post-study work visa was led to the view that one of the advantages of UK education, valued by employers and graduates, was no longer available. Cancelling this opportunity for work experience in

the UK could disadvantage future students intending to stay overseas instead of returning home directly after studying.

There were generational differences as to whether there was an expectation from studying in the UK that graduates would return home or work overseas. In the context interviews, ‘older’ interviewees reported that post-graduation they had not considered the possibility of living overseas. They accepted their responsibility was to family and, in most cases, to the Nepalese state which had sponsored their education. Their view was probably also conditioned by the fact as government sponsored students, they could return to permanent careers in education, medicine or other professions.

Developing subject knowledge in business studies courses was an expectation of graduates, but skills in the application of knowledge for use in careers was a priority.

Participant MG 11 alludes to necessary updating of management procedures:

“We need proper accounting systems, we need registries to keep track of when people come and go. And the thing though is the business has been here for 15 years.”

In Chapter five it was noted that there should also be more opportunities to benefit from developing implementation skills whilst studying in the UK. An example of how applying skills could benefit a graduate can be seen in these comments from participant FG 03:

“During my course at X university, I benefited from all the experiences that I had, working with real organisations, sitting down with them. It taught me that there are especially issues relating to the environment, many things that can be done better.”

The views of participant FG 03 should be seen in the context of comments from participant MG 21 who, having studied a module in managing people commented,

“Unless and until I get experience here, I cannot say exactly whether [knowledge from

the module] can be applied in Nepal". The lack of opportunities for professional experience was also seen in comments about an operations management module from participant FG 20 who stated, *"we did not have the chance to go to out to see things"*. His expectation from course materials was that modules would include visits and opportunities for practice. New ways in which UK universities can work more closely with Nepalese universities were discussed in the context interviews and with employers and could be designed to give wider international experience to lecturers. Working together on reciprocal internships would, as an example, also address the problem employers have with graduates' lack of work experience.

There was an expectation that in leading UK universities there would be a diversity of people in the classroom with the view expressed by participant FG 03 that, *"you can only learn better if you have people coming from different backgrounds"*. However, she was concerned as to whether UK institutions were using the recruitment of international students for their own benefit and, *"not for the community"* concluding that:

"I attended my university not just because of the name but because I know there are people who were coming to learn as well, not for the reasons that it is in the UK and that institution had a first-class reputation."

Another graduate, participant FG 09, when reflecting on one of her lecturers commented:

"He used to make an effort to find out about everyone in the class, where they came from, their culture. He was one of the best."

An expectation from one of the employers interviewed, participant EMP 01, a Human Resources Manager of a multinational organisation, was that he expected graduates to have a good level of international experience in order that, *"we can use that to build the country"*. However, he pointed out:

“Someone who is honest and hard-working would be equally important for me as someone who has a fancy degree to be honest. Local knowledge who can interact with businesses, that’s what I want.”

The high expectations of the knowledge gained and quality of teaching were confirmed, although as seen in Chapter five, there were some reservations about the feedback on assignments and support for students with dissertations. An unexpected finding of value to a graduate, participant MG 17, was his view that because of a lack of tutor support he benefitted from having to do things for himself. This was not always the case for his colleagues who experienced difficulties with their dissertations.

“Whatever I did, I did myself. That taught me a lot but if he [the lecture] was helping me, spoon feeding, I would not have learnt that much. So that would not be good for me. But I did not get his support. Only a few of my friends were getting support from their supervisors. Most of my friends were struggling.”

However, after reflecting on the positives of their UK education, graduates’ opinions became negative when they discussed that their employment expectations were not always realised after returning home. Their disillusionment, often exhibited as frustration, was centred around management attitudes and responses to new ways of thinking. There was no understanding of power relationships in business as graduates expected that their ideas and timescales for improving practice would be readily accepted. Or, as expressed by participant MG 01, *“If they don’t want to do it, it’s never going to work”*.

Feedback on the IAP profiling questionnaires supplied by the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Organisation gave examples of ways in which graduates could understand and manage in their behaviour and language, differences in an individual’s own cultural orientation. Not having this awareness may explain why, within a

comparatively short time of returning to Nepal, some graduates had become dissatisfied with their work experience.

Employers attributed the scarcity of jobs to political uncertainty and a resultant lack of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in infrastructure. When confronted with new ideas from graduates, employers suggested their expectations were unrealistic. They even implied graduate expectations should be reined in, with an argument from participant EMP 03, *“that you have to be slowly, slowly”*, when suggesting change.

The initial expectations from UK education were positive but, as seen from the interviews with returned home graduates in exploring this research question their anticipated opportunities and hopes were not always fulfilled. Their reflections led to the view that they did not have the necessary knowledge and understanding and experience of how to respond to or counter negative criticisms of employers towards their ideas for implementing and managing change.

6.2.3 Research question 3:

How does the UK educational experience impact on graduates’ relationship with and values towards work, including job satisfaction, when returning to Nepal?

The principal concern of graduates without the security of working in a family business was finding employment after graduation. The discussion around research question 2 included several examples of where Nepalese graduates considered that their experience of UK full-time education had not lived up to their expectations.

The work of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) on cross-cultural differences was the second constituent of the conceptual framework used in the analysis of the

research data for this thesis. Anbari (2003) drew attention to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's development of the seven dimensions model of culture. The studies by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner revolve around the individual in contrast to the work of Hofstede (2001) which compared values, behaviours, institutions and organisations across nations. Anbari (op. cit.) noted that both approaches include cultural dimensions and dominant value systems.

In discussing relations between people, Anbari (2003, p. 1) noted that two main cultural differences have been identified, "Hofstede distinguishes between individualism and collectivism". Trompenaars breaks down this distinction into two dimensions: universalism versus particularism and individualism versus communitarianism. The most pertinent of the cultural dimensions in the data analysed for my research were particularism where the emphasis is on attachment to one's own interest group and Communitarianism where the focus is on responsibility to the community and the family. Dissatisfaction was reflected in several of the themes and associate themes. This research question takes forward the discussion by considering how the UK educational experience, together with issues around cultural diversity, may have contributed to graduates reassessing the value of their education towards employment and job satisfaction.

The significance of postgraduate recruitment to all UK universities was shown in HESA's statistics (HESA 2016); for 2014/15, 46% of full-time postgraduate students were non-EU domiciled. The opportunity to take part in a programme with a diverse group of students is seen as valuable in the interview with participant FG 03 who was working with an INGO in Nepal and raised the significance to her work of, "*interaction*

with people from different places around the world". When asked to clarify what she meant by interaction she referred to the experience of a friend who said that the diversity of her course group was not interesting enough for her friend to recommend the course to somebody else. The benefit of multi-cultural interaction was seen in participant FG 03's university experience saying, *"the best times I have had in X university, was when we were sitting around and there were people from Namibia, Ruanda, Beirut, me and the Professor"*.

The structure of the Nepalese economy and management culture within Hinduism may lead to an undervaluation of work and job satisfaction. It was seen in Chapter two that the lack of investment, including FDI in the Nepalese economy had led to a failing infrastructure and a shortage of graduate jobs. Graduates wanting to pursue a career in international business were critical of the lack of international experience of some lecturers in key areas including human resources management, marketing and strategy. Areas where UK universities were less effective were said by participant PG 07 to relate to, *"How to work together in a team? How to build consensus? How to move forward in terms of strategy?"* The evidence of inadequate training and experience of working in a team could lead to a situation where, as suggested by participant MG 07, an employee through her inexperience and discomfort of working in a team, might reach the point where she felt it necessary to leave a company.

The problem is with the person. If she is there she needs to identify the nature of the team with whom she is working. Slowly and slowly she needs to go for change. If she exposes everything at the first time, people will be terrified. They will say no. We cannot work with her. She is different to us. If we let her do this, she may impress our boss and she may be our supervisor in some years' time. They may trouble her, she may leave us."

In Chapter five it was shown that graduates were critical of the strategic significance to Nepal of developing courses in entrepreneurship. The relevance for UK universities to develop a graduate's entrepreneurial skills as a means of creating employment and enhancing job satisfaction as well as national wealth was shown by Pant (2015, p. 37) in that:

“Entrepreneurship in a society is dependent upon various factors; socio-economic status of the country being the one of the important one. If people see opportunities potentially bringing desired returns then they go for it. People with entrepreneurial qualities would explore the opportunities created by the economic changes that the society is undergoing.”

Graduates, on their return to Nepal expressed their frustration when they failed to successfully introduce new ideas to their employers that had been generated from their studies in the UK and observing or experiencing UK working practices. Employers judged the returning graduates' timescale for implementing changes and expecting career progression as too ambitious. Employers claimed this desire for early promotion was not their experience of home graduates who were able to assimilate more quickly into their organisations.

Analysis of IAP questionnaires suggests graduates may have been experiencing the behavioural response of communitarianism from their employers, implying the focus was on responsibility to the organisation and not an individual. A communitarian orientation was precisely the same as one of the dominant cultural orientations of the graduates themselves, meaning that individual initiatives, as opposed to group consensus, were unlikely to be accepted without considerable discussion and agreement by the organisation. It was suggested by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's IAP feedback (2014) that:

“Persons tend to see themselves as people who take shared responsibility, are committed to common goals and objectives, and are loyal to the group they belong to.”

The group to which they belong in Nepal includes the immediate and extended family and the family business within which there is a degree of certainty when decisions are taken.

The dilemma facing UK universities of how to react to cultural diversity issues was noted by Race (2012, p. 5) who states, “Educational structures including universities need to change to respond to continuously changing cultures”. The significance of cultural differences can also be seen in the way policies and practices are developed in organisations at varying stages of development. It can be seen how different values may impact on job satisfaction. In a study undertaken across five cultures by Jackson (2002, p. 455) found that:

“Western managers and HR practitioners who work with affiliates in non-Western emerging countries should particularly be aware of differences in “locus of human value. Policies and practices developed in the West along instrumental lines see people primarily as a means to an end. This may be directly opposed to a humanistic view of human value that sees people as having a value in themselves.”

Using the Bronfenbrenner model, the loyalty to and authority of family is indicative of Jackson’s “human value” (op. cit., p. 455). Human value was seen in the way in which Nepalese families supported and were committed to the development of children through all stages of their education. Evidence from the research in Nepal resonates with the Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model of Bronfenbrenner (1979). Human value is also shown through the commonality of the extended family involving apportioning financial support, networking and the status in the community award to those employed in family businesses, including the preferential recruitment of family

into family businesses. The findings from Nepal demonstrate human value through evidence of Jackson's (op. cit.) "moral commitment and involvement".

Clark (1998, p. 3) in his work on identifying measures of job satisfaction in OECD countries identified six summary variables by measuring workers' evaluations of: Pay, Hours of work, Future prospects (promotion and job security), How hard or difficult the job is, Job content: (interest, prestige and independence) and Interpersonal relationships (with co-workers and with management). Historically, employers needed to provide, "the right mix of wages and non-pecuniary conditions to avoid worker discontent" (Flanagan et al, 1974, p. 1). The findings in Chapter five demonstrate that when discussing work-life balance, pay and any favourable conditions of living and working in the UK, the graduates in this study see those as less important than the benefits of returning to, and working with, family in Nepal.

The result for graduates was that their experience of UK education was not delivering the prospects or job satisfaction that they and their families had been expecting. Disappointment on issues such as career progression or even employment circumstances were often linked to historical cultural and caste traditions. The conflict between family and personal independence became apparent in Theme 1. Loyalty to family often came before personal ambition as seen in the findings from Theme 4 which showed that family authority continued to play an important role in the life decisions of graduates.

An explanation found in the analysis of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's IAP questionnaires adds knowledge in that differing or even similar cultural orientations of graduates and employers may work against job satisfaction and lead to frustration. There

is clear evidence of frustration in Theme 4 and when participant MG 01 refers to their inability to influence decisions in their organisation stating, *“Everything is decided from the board. But we are just there to do the work. You are not empowered to make decisions on your own”* a situation categorised as instrumentalism in Jackson’s (op. cit. p. 457) model.

The feedback to Nepalese graduates from the analysis of the IAP questionnaires identified ways in which they could understand why their employer responded in a particular manner to their ideas and what the necessary approach was for the graduate to argue their case with their employer.

Findings here add to there being a close connection between research questions 2 and 3. Together they confirm that whilst some aspects of UK education continue to meet expectations and even dreams, the actual or observed experience of work in the UK fell short of graduate expectations. This has led to a diminution of the value of and satisfaction with UK education.

6.2.4 Research question 4:

What specific attributes do Nepalese employers look for in UK educated Nepalese business studies graduates?

The findings from Chapter five challenge many of the expectations and assumptions made by graduates of UK education with respect to their post-graduation employment in Nepal. The experience of graduates supports the conclusion from Baruch and Bozionelos, (2011, p. 83) that, “doing a good job does not guarantee career success”.

Research Question 4 is designed to reflect fully the views of Nepalese employers. An objective of the research design was to ensure a more balanced assessment of views than would be obtained from graduate answers alone. The research for this thesis helps to address a knowledge gap as, “little research has been undertaken on the determinants of employability” (Baruch and Bozionelos, 2011, p. 68). The use of Bronfenbrenner’s model (1979) and the work of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) on cultural dimensions, have shown that expectations from educational decisions favouring UK education for post-graduation employment were neither clear nor met. The implications of culture and societal bonding continue to play an important role in employment decisions between returned home Nepalese graduates and their employers.

The attributes Nepalese employers value and expect from UK education included academic excellence, critical thinking, communication skills and personal development. Nepalese employers expressed different views to graduates on the complexities of handling management of change issues and updating operational procedures. There was also a mismatch, seen in Chapter five, between graduates and employers over participation in decision-making. Graduates were seen by employers to be expecting more in terms of career progression and input into policy and operational changes.

In Chapter five it was established that securing employment was the top priority for returning Nepalese UK educated graduates who are faced with increasing competition. An employer, participant EMP 02, explained “*we get 100 applicants and at least 25% highly qualified from overseas universities and two to three from Ivy league universities*”. The highly competitive nature of the jobs market in Nepal supports the evidence in Chapter two that UK universities should ensure employers and education

consultancies are fully aware of the graduate attributes that are developed in modules and courses.

Baruch and Bozionelos, (2011) conclude that evidence from the literature suggests the relationship between educational achievement and career success was “only modest” (p. 83). This may go some way towards explaining how employers in Nepal justified their decisions regarding their continuing trust and loyalty to family. An exception was seen in the recruitment of technical or professionally qualified staff into family or non-family businesses. An employer, participant EMP 02 explained further:

“If you look at the private sector in Nepal it’s more of a family owned, trading businesses. They don’t need degrees to run their businesses and much of their business is done underground and where in universities do you learn how to make a profit out of it?”

A report from the CIPD (2016) highlighted the different meanings of being ‘employable’ to individuals and employers and that graduates would consider employability over securing employment throughout their entire career, whilst others focus on their short-term capability in securing a job.

Graduates were positive in their endorsement of UK education for improving self-confidence and considered this to be one of the most important attributes they had developed. However, they came to realise after joining an organisation that they were failing to demonstrate and successfully implement new skills. They were then critical of their employers’ responsiveness to their ideas. In discussing his work, Trompenaars records his aim as hoping to make people, “more aware of differences in culture and their fundamental nature through understanding themselves through others” (in Lloyd and Trompenaars, 1993, p. 17). This employer, participant EMP 02, commented that he was aware of people who come up with, “*very good ideas, very sharp*” but when it

comes to debates and arguments, *“they put themselves in the back because the problem is communication. If you allow them to speak in Nepali there’s no problem”*.

Using the results from Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner questionnaires, Particularism and Communitarianism were evident in the graduates’ dominant cultural orientation. Results from the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) database of Nepalese managers show that Particularism and Communitarianism are the two most noticeable cultural orientations and are therefore the same as those analysed for the graduates who completed the IAP questionnaires.

The behavioural response by employers with ‘Particularism’ as a dominant cultural orientation was contrary to graduates’ expectations. The recommendation from the feedback given to graduates and copied to myself (Trompenaars IAP Feedback, 2014) showed that those graduates with Particularism as their dominant orientation should, in their behavioural response to others, “give people autonomy to make their own decisions”. The fact that they had not been treated in this way led to their frustration. Rejection of ideas was also seen in responses from parents and employers towards graduates’ ideas and plans.

With respect to ‘Communitarianism’, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (op. cit.) recorded that:

“Members of a predominantly communitarian society are firmly integrated into groups which provide help and protection in exchange for a strong sense of loyalty. The group comes before the individual, and people are mainly oriented towards common goals and objectives.”

An important caveat for ‘Communitarianism’ noted by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (op. cit.) was that it might lead to a lack of personal initiative, ambition, and

personal responsibility. There was considerable evidence cited in interviews towards reliance on the family business for employment. For those without such security, adopting a more entrepreneurial approach, including starting their own business, could be an alternative career pathway.

Aside from ‘Particularism’ and ‘Communitarianism’, it was shown in the analysis of IAP questionnaires that the cultural dimension of ‘Achievement’ was associated with more graduates, 15 out of the 23, than any of the six other dimensions. It has been shown by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, (2014) that:

“Achievement means that people believe that you are what you do, and they base their worth accordingly. These cultures value performance, no matter who you are.”

The actual experience of employers towards graduates was more inclined towards the opposing orientation of ‘Ascription’ in that decisions requiring change were assigned to groups for a collective decision to be made in circumstances regarding power, title, and position. This limited their opportunities to influence decision-making.

Participant FG 03 gave an example of how the language barrier was overcome when an INGO was able to establish the needs of local communities by direct communications between them and the INGO employee, a Nepalese UK educated graduate, who reported back to management in English. She said, to my surprise, that in her experience this was the first time this method of direct communication had been used. The graduate could bring knowledge of Hindu and Buddhist cultures into modifying INGO policy for a much-needed infrastructure investment. Previously conversations had been between INGO officials and community leaders with word for word translations of conversations used to inform decision-making.

In the INGO example, there is clear confirmation of language, listening and the communication skills of the graduate. This is in sharp contrast to evidence in Research Question 3 of graduate frustration with lack of support for their ideas. The analysis of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner IAP questionnaires indicates this may be attributable to differing dominant cultural behaviours of graduates, as employees, and their employers. This example suggests that more knowledge and awareness of their cultural differences may be useful to graduates through understanding and having opportunities to practice appropriate response behaviours in the course.

Participant employer EMP 02 stated from his experience of working in the private sector in Nepal that, *“There are very few businesses who would entertain graduates based on the merits of their academic background.”* He would base his judgement on the CV and interview with an applicant commenting, *“It is easy to see [know] about them whilst we are talking to them”*.

By way of contrast, another employer, participant EMP 07, gives his suggestion to overcoming the frustration that can build up in graduates in the early stages of their employment.

“It’s a good idea for a fresh graduate to connect people with a company. For example, if the employee was already working with us and doing an MBA and could impress the people with his/her work, especially the management people, then we would give them a chance to progress.”

This view contradicts many of the views expressed in this thesis by UK educated Nepalese graduates when they told of the insurmountable difficulties they had faced when trying to implement any of their skills they had learnt.

The findings in Chapter five have shown that Nepalese employers continue to rate UK education highly but that degrees from UK universities, except those higher up the

ranking tables, were now considered as being equal to home (Nepalese) degrees. It was the policy of one organisation to give graduates from overseas universities, including UK universities, the same starting point as graduates from select Nepalese universities who had obtained the same qualifications. Participant employer EMP 01 explained that college education was regarded as 'lower' than university education stating, *"We give graduates a management training which is middle level position. This contrasts with Nepalese college graduates who are employed at entry level, a lower level"*. This policy was already presenting the employer with problems when comparing the abilities and academic qualifications gained, especially from UK universities at both extremes of the ranking tables and those graduates whose course had included compulsory, *"internships which the Americans have"*.

This employer, participant EMP 01, was uncomfortable giving the same entry point to those graduates with the "same qualifications whether a person has done a one-year course and another a two-year course". In his view, 18 months to two years would be a *"decent MBA programme"* but some colleges in the UK *"which we have never heard of"* were offering MBAs completed within a year, giving rise to, *"issues of quality"*. He concluded that whilst, *"The credit hours allocated may be the same, they have invested more time and they are more well trained I think"*. However, for people who have obtained their Chartered Accounting qualification from the US or India, *"we give them positions which are a little higher than those with the MBA"*.

Consequently, my perception was that this employer may have begun to lose confidence in the quality of some courses and UK institutions having further stated:

“For one thing it does not mean that if they’ve studied in the UK they’ve studied in a very good college, or university. Secondly, there are good colleges in Nepal or India where the course is equally rigorous.”

There may also be some misunderstanding about the academic value, as seen by several employers, on comparing a grade point average (GPA) with a UK degree classification. The GPA scheme allows students to, “demonstrate their achievement throughout their studies in a simple yet detailed way, that is recognised internationally” (Brookes, 2017).

Participant employer, EMP 01 commented that it was not always possible to obtain information on subject grades and learning outcomes from UK degree certificates and that, *“there was more information on GPA transcripts”*.

It became clear in the discussion of general versus specialist degrees, that most students applying for positions in business had studied for a general and not a specialist degree. Employers and education consultancies may either not be fully aware of the full range of business degrees offered in the UK or were uncertain as to how graduates with various qualifications, should be positioned within organisations.

Employers were aware of increasing numbers of high quality Nepalese graduates available to them attributing this partly to improvements in the standards of some Nepalese colleges and universities. One employer, participant EMP 04 was seen to be facing a dilemma when choosing between a home and overseas educated graduate, suggesting that, *“[X] Nepalese university is very disciplined and has very good programmes”* adding further that there is considerable competition for places, *“Thousands apply but only a few get in”*. This gave employers plenty of applicants to choose from, with participant EMP 04 commenting, *“They will always be good”*.

Initially graduates and employers confirmed their general satisfaction with the knowledge gained from UK education, but after further discussion graduates admitted to difficulties understanding complex concepts and applying their knowledge in the workplace. Employers, were concerned as to whether there were sufficient credits in the UK degree to confirm that their expectations of knowledge they were seeking had been reached. They found it difficult to accept that graduates would have both a full understanding and ability to apply knowledge from courses in the workplace as in some UK post graduate courses no previous work experience was required and no compulsory internship had been undertaken before, during or after graduation. As participant Employer EMP 01 stated:

“What I’ve noticed is that people who do the MBA without work experience have the theoretical knowledge but they are unable to apply [it].”

Whilst there was awareness of the reputations of highly ranked UK universities, referring to The Times’ rankings, there was also a reluctant acceptance from participant EMP 01, *“that graduates from those places would never come back to work in Nepal”*. He went on to add, *“We do have people from other universities in the UK [names given], but the mix “makes it difficult to gauge”* before concluding that in financial services, *“We like people from ACCA”*.

Furthermore, multinational organisations were looking for a graduate’s in-depth understanding of issues around globalisation including experience of operating in an international or global context. Before the cancellation of the UK’s two-year post-study visa this may have come from working, as well as studying, in the UK.

One aspect of UK courses, as seen in my findings, was the value graduates placed on interacting with a diverse group of peers. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012)

examined views on whether individuals can work singly or collaboratively in order to receive credit from their manager. In the results from the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) global database of managers, 47% of Nepalese managers said they received credit as individuals for their work, compared to 70% in the UK. A further example from the global data base relates to, 'acting as it suits you even if nothing is achieved' which 9% of Nepalese managers disagreed with compared to 56% of UK managers. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner suggested countries, "where only a minority (of managers) disagreed - as was the case of Nepal - are broadly speaking ascriptive cultures" (2012, p. 129). Ascriptive cultures attribute behaviour to the groups into which individuals they were born or attributed by birth right and include gender, caste or age and societal ranking. My results confirm the ascriptive approach of Nepalese managers.

Where experience of working in other countries was not required, Nepalese employers often gave preference to appointing suitably qualified home graduates. These graduates were often recruited precisely because of their uninterrupted exposure to, and expectations of, Nepalese cultural norms and traditions. Participant EMP 02 realised that employment of locally educated graduates was a way of avoiding the differences in behaviour they experienced when integrating overseas educated graduates into their existing organisational culture. Later he admitted to the benefit of working in other countries by stating, "*They do not need to go abroad but when they do go abroad to India, UK or anywhere they are more exposed to what is happening, how you can improve things*".

In concluding this analysis of findings which answer Research Question 4, it is evident that the attributes Nepalese employers were looking for in UK educated Nepalese graduates are also being seen in home educated graduates. The views of employers were being formed around issues of work experience, and there was every reason to conclude that the frustration of newly appointed UK educated Nepalese graduates was attributable to cultural misunderstandings.

A study by Varma et al. (1996) found performance appraisals are a function of how much supervisors like their employees. These results are also reflected in the findings of Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham (2010) which showed that employers are more interested in employees' social skills than their cognitive ability and preferred their own competency models to academic prescriptions for success. It was shown in the previous research questions that the influences and expectations of long term careers were built around family and family businesses within the fabric of Nepalese society. The importance of family connections was also inferred from participant EMP 02 who stated, *"I have been here for ten years and after talking to people for a while, you can get an idea of where they come from, their background and experience"*.

Primarily for those UK educated Nepalese graduates without family connections, the main challenge for UK education is to ensure the employment values expected by both graduates and employers continue to be reinforced through any necessary changes to UK business studies courses.

6.2.5 Research question 5:

How has the design and delivery of a Business Studies course prepared Nepalese business graduates for employment on returning home?

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills comments on employability are also seen as the major priority for future students returning to Nepal, “If we want young people who are ready for the workplace, we need to be ready to help build their employability skills” (UKCES, 2013, p. 2).

From their experience of both UK education and employment in Nepal, the business graduates interviewed in this study have identified weaknesses in the design and delivery of the business studies courses they graduated from. Employers highlighted areas where there are vacancies in Nepal for qualified UK educated Nepalese graduates. With this auxiliary knowledge UK universities could offer and promote more suitable modules to students on courses or in the information they offer potential students to schools, educational media, the British Council and education consultancies.

One of the issues raised by graduates was that UK teaching materials, including case studies and management models, did not give adequate attention to the context and specific needs of Nepalese business, neglecting the variety of business organisations and business opportunities in Nepal. There should be a balance between studying regional issues and the needs of local and small family businesses and larger organisations. The advice from the Quality Assurance Agency (2015, p. 6), for master’s degrees, was that:

“Organisations should be interpreted to include a wide range of different types including, for example, public, private and not-for-profit, together with a comprehensive range of sizes and structures of organisations”.

In establishing the context for this discussion, previous research questions have noted the challenge of ongoing political uncertainty, the growth of private secondary schools, a lack of infrastructure investment and the difficulties for Nepalese graduates of finding rewarding employment when returning to Nepal from their studies in the UK. There was also concern as to whether lecturers delivering business modules had sufficient international experience.

Bronfenbrenner (1989, 1999) referred to developing a Process–Person–Context–Time Model (PPCT); the interactions between these four concepts form the basis of the theory. Using the PPCT model, the identification of political uncertainty in Nepal adds to the understanding of both context and time dimensions. Context relates to cultural and caste factors and geographical boundaries being challenged over time by various political parties. Time in the PPCT model included the 10-year civil war (1996 -2006) and, as yet, there is still no final agreement on a constitution for Nepal.

Geldenhuis and Wevers (2013) developed Bronfenbrenner’s ideas further when developing a bio-ecological model for learning and teaching. Their work focused on the explanation of “systemic influences on child development” (2013, p. 4). Their argument was primarily focused therefore on the cumulative impact of multiple contexts on development.

Discussions have shown that future students without the security of employment in family businesses will face increasing competition for jobs from home (Nepalese educated) graduates. The majority of graduates interviewed were working in family businesses or gained their position through networking between families.

In the interviews, employers advised that there was a continuing need to recruit graduates with an understanding, and preferably experience, of working and managing in an international business. These opportunities normally favoured overseas educated Nepalese graduates. The importance of developing competency in entrepreneurial skills noted in Chapter five, which form an integral part of the structural development and economic growth in the predominantly rural and agricultural country such as Nepal, was recognised in the work of, Gries and Naudé, (2010). They noted that high-growth entrepreneurship was pervasive in developing countries. There was already evidence of new business start-ups from graduates interviewed but employers and graduates recommended that there should be a greater emphasis within business studies courses on entrepreneurship as a positive way of creating jobs in Nepal. The most effective approaches to developing entrepreneurship skills were seen in a UK Government policy review to involve experiential learning, based around task-oriented development focused on real business problems (Gov.uk, 2015).

Developing self-confidence through interaction in lectures or workshops was appreciated. Participant MG 10 confirmed that opportunities for interaction built up his confidence.

“It was more theoretical. Especially finance. Nepal is a small market for finance and the theories not so useful. I learnt more the interactivity in the programmes. I had a phobia in me. If someone questioned me I was like ‘sorry’, a bit nervous about answering. After this programme, I felt more confident. It helped me a lot in business.”

Further into the interview he added, *“This is what I wanted to develop my business. If you are afraid of something, you cannot manage it easily.”*

In the interviews, graduates and employers cited the need for students to gain experience of studying and interacting with students from other countries. A diverse mix of students in classes was seen in the interviews to be valued by students. However, a contrast in the views of graduates was evident. Participant FG 04 commented, *“I got disappointed that I had joined that university...because of all the Indians and Asians, so I thought it should be a mix”*. On the other hand participant MG 17 commented that, *“It was enjoyable. Lots of friends from all around the world. Most of them from South Asia, Africa, China, Thailand, Philippines. Some European from Greece, France and more. They were mixed”*.

The benefit of studying with students from several countries was also seen in the discussion around the analysis of IAP questionnaires. This showed that a graduate's own ability to work and communicate effectively with their employer may have been influenced by the cultural experience of living and studying in the UK. The views of these graduates were supported in the work of the HEA (2015) which specifically mentioned the needs of international students who will have been exposed to previous and new styles of teaching in two environments. There were different perspectives from graduates towards teaching methods in the UK and Nepal. Postgraduates were more likely than undergraduates to be comfortable with UK teaching methods but the outcomes of the interviews show that in a business studies course designed for undergraduates, more pastoral time should be allocated by staff for discussing the learning difficulties of any students.

Greater awareness of working practices would help graduates build the evidence employers need and reassure employers that graduates are able to respond to immediate

as well as longer term needs. Suggestions were made that this could be achieved by allowing more guest lectures to be included in business studies courses.

The discussion on teaching methods led employers to ask for more information on the actual activities a student would undertake to demonstrate their learning and the results of assessment. Although the grade point average certificate always gives the grades of each subject studied, employers said that transcripts were not automatically included with UK degree certificates at employment interviews. There was, therefore, little evidence of how well the student had performed throughout their studies. The inclusion of transcripts would help employers to clarify issues of comparability between UK degree classification and grade point average (GPA) systems used by other overseas institutions. The support services, including welfare and housing, offered by the university to incoming students were commented upon favourably in interviews with the graduates. However, graduates expressed their concern that more attention should be given in modules to explaining the teaching and assessment methods.

Although this may be thought of a fundamental requirement in teaching, the findings demonstrated that some undergraduates experienced difficulties understanding assignment tasks. In the interviews, there was a view that difficulties in understanding may relate to competency in the English language. The situation may differ between students coming from Nepalese state education and those from private schools as evidenced by participant FG 02 who stated, *“My school was very strict on speaking English. We were not allowed to speak Nepali in school”*. Participant MG 05 further added, *“Even though we may learn the same things, there is a vast difference if you are taught in English (in private schools)”*.

There was evidence of graduates being critical of the teaching materials used. In the interview with participant FG 02, she refers to problems with assignments. There is a reference to ‘slides’ and to the over use of PowerPoint. She says this led to limited or even no time for students to raise any problems with lecturers:

“The thing that bothered me a lot...when they were giving us assignments it was totally different from what we were studying in class. We had to do our assignment based on a totally different thing. We had no idea; we had to work very hard on our assignments. The teacher had not provided us with much information.”

The implications for business studies courses attended by those Nepalese graduates returning home have been consolidated into four principal themes: firstly, international experience of UK lecturers; secondly, students’ difficulties in understanding teaching and set tasks; thirdly, reputation of UK universities; and finally, monitoring of student progress and the dissemination of information to employers.

Firstly, there was criticism that only some of the lecturers who teach modules in subjects such as international marketing and human resource management had, themselves, any experience of managing and working in international businesses. In interviews with employers it was recognised that UK and Nepalese universities faced similar problems in recruiting staff with experience of international business that both they and students were seeking. Employers suggested that for staff teaching international modules, short term teaching exchange contracts could be arranged between lecturers from UK and Nepalese universities. Exchanges would enable lecturers in both countries to contextualise teaching materials. The connections would also give lecturers opportunities to input into each other’s teaching materials, including collaboration on developing case studies to take back to their own countries. In these exchanges, it should

also be possible for UK and Nepalese lecturers to discuss in more details the specific problems with local employers.

Secondly, the problems undergraduates referred to were similar to those identified by Carroll (2008, p. 10), who refers to students, *“tackling assessments in a new academic context, with unfamiliar academic skills that are still developing”*. Postgraduate students, having previously studied at undergraduate level, judged themselves as being better able to understand how their learning could be transferred to business situations in their own country.

Thirdly, the decision of an employer to consider graduates from a UK university, or the advice given to future students by an education consultancy to seek admission to a specific UK university, may increasingly depend on the reputation of that individual university. An employer from one of the multinationals, participant EMP 01 commented, *“If you MBA graduates from one of the higher ranked ‘old universities’, people from those places would never come back to work here in Nepal”*. He added, *“We do have a few people working for us from a mix of universities”*. He lists several post-92 universities and lower ranking pre-92 universities adding, *“That mix is very different you know. It makes it difficult to gauge”*.

Fourthly, the close monitoring of a student’s progress affords an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of teaching materials. Lecturers should be able to compile case histories of student learning and career progression. This would enable examples of good practice to be shared with future cohorts of students enabling them to develop their own portfolio of evidence to show future employers how they achieved the learning outcomes of their programme. Maintaining close contact with employers will enable

any changes to a business studies course to take account of their changing needs. Finally, the discussion of Research Question 5 has drawn attention to the need for more information to be made available to employers, students and education consultancies on the career paths available to students after studying on individual courses.

6.3 Conclusion to Chapter Six

This discussion has shown that previous studies, including those of Hemsley- Brown and Foskett, (2001), Mazzarol and Souter (2002), Bodycott (2009) and Rounsaville (2011) have gone some way towards reducing gaps in knowledge on the educational decision-making processes of Nepalese graduates. Awareness of the context for my research was important in interpreting the views of both Nepalese graduates and employers. The influence of parents, extended family and historical connections with the UK, remain important factors in the educational decision-making of graduates. It has been shown that culture and caste remain deep-rooted in economic and social life in Nepal and its influence has also been shown in employment.

Any concerns over the quality of UK education were not seen to be affecting higher ranked UK universities, or those with reputations based on subject or research excellence. This thesis adds to the conclusion that, “not only is gaining a degree important for ‘foreign [Nepalese] students’ but also how degrees could bring career advancement, prestige and upward mobility” (Furnham and Bochner, 1986, p. 38). Although improvements to Nepalese education were recognised by all participants, the influences on graduates, the expectations they held for UK education and how this would affect their future careers were contributing factors to why the graduates

interviewed had chosen to participate in UK tertiary education over Nepalese universities.

It was also noted that all but two out of the 23 graduates interviewed for this thesis were from families with sufficient financial means and had been educated in Nepalese private secondary schools before attending UK universities. Although employers still held UK universities in high regard, there were some doubts over the academic value of some qualifications. UK degree certificates were not accompanied with full transcripts of modules studied and learning outcomes achieved. A preference was shown by employers for the way information was given on grade point average certificates.

It is evident from the discussion that whilst there are many and varied influences on the educational decision-making of graduates, UK universities have their own part to play in disseminating information. This was seen in the recommendations of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) that universities should, “produce information for their intended audiences about the learning opportunities they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy” 2015, p. 23). In a study of UK higher education commissioned by the QAA (2013), attention was drawn to assessment feedback time targets not being met, urging institutions to tackle the most salient issues in feedback quality stating that, “institutional policies should prioritise quality, format and timing of feedback in relation to other assessments, managed at the course level, over standardised feedback turnaround times” (QAA, 2013, p. 40).

These findings led to a discussion around the final research question of the implications for the design and delivery of business studies courses to meet the expectation of

graduates returning home. Changes are needed to UK business studies courses in the selection of teaching materials, enhancing opportunities for student interaction in classes and the development of entrepreneurship skills. Graduates need to know how their own behaviour towards employers may need to be modified to ensure their ideas are considered instead of immediately being rejected. Successful changes to business studies courses should lead to the creation of more employment opportunities in Nepal for UK educated Nepalese graduates. Creating more opportunities should also help to sustain the competitive position of UK education for recruiting international students as it is facing increasing competition.

There is evidence in this discussion of how the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979, 1989) and the work of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) on cultural dimensions create greater understanding of the influences on a graduate's educational decision-making processes. The conceptual approach used in this thesis has led to more explicit knowledge of factors that influence not only the initial decision-making process of graduates but also the interpretation of reflections of Nepalese graduates against their expectations of UK education for improved employment prospects.

The research for this thesis has also shown greater uncertainty in employers' minds over the quality of UK education because of the closure of many private colleges in the UK and resultant financial hardship to many Nepalese families. Employers, education consultancies, graduates and parents reported that these changes had damaged the UK's reputation. There was evidence that employers may be losing some of their confidence in the quality of UK education. This loss in confidence has been

partly brought about by improvements in Nepalese education as well as changes by UK Government to its visa policy. A major concern to employers was the cancellation of the UK's two-year post-study work visa, seen by graduates, employers and education consultancies as removing a quintessential advantage of UK education. Nepalese education consultancies had moved quickly to reassure parents and potential students seeking overseas education that other opportunities were available.

A major reservation seen by graduates with regards to their UK education, was their inability to fully comprehend how to react to the needs of businesses in Nepal and how to implement the necessary operational changes. Employers and graduates were of the view that UK business studies courses were too 'UK centred'. Employers were concerned that the learning outcomes for courses should be more explicit as to how they would add value to Nepalese businesses. There was a need to include more evidence that graduates understand the different social and political orientations of companies, including businesses developing international activities. Learning outcomes should evidence how knowledge could be implemented and UK universities should develop work experience opportunities for students before, during or even after graduation. Developing the work experience of graduates through their business studies courses would help offset the threat posed to recruiting Nepalese and other international students from new or existing HE providers at still offer work experience schemes.

When looking to the future employment of returning Nepalese graduates, their high expectations from UK education was seen to be troubling to Nepalese employers who suggested graduates were trying to progress too quickly in their careers and their salary

expectations were too high. There was a timely reminder from Nepalese employers that improvements in the quality and numbers of graduates from Nepalese universities was leading to more competition from home graduates for the limited number of graduate level positions available.

The discussion has also shown that the employment situation facing graduates in Nepal is more complex than in the UK. It is not simply an overall lack of suitable jobs but also patterns of long established management practices which, for some, are perceived as impassable cultural barriers. Home educated graduates were said to be more amenable to working in situations where cultural sensitivity was an essential prerequisite of employment.

The discussion of the findings of this thesis demonstrates how working with employers in the design and delivery of business studies courses can enhance graduate employability and encourage admissions to UK universities from Nepalese students, and potentially other international students. Graduates, employers and education consultancies advised that if changes were made to business studies courses they should include more explicit information on how the chosen course enhances employability. It was found that a successful working relationship between a UK university and Nepalese education consultancies offered the greatest prospect of increasing admissions to UK universities.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has considered the influences on the educational decision-making of Nepalese Business Studies graduates and their expectations for employment. The qualitative research undertaken was based on the reflections of returned home Nepalese business studies graduates, the employers of graduate participants and Nepalese education consultancies. The research explored whether the expectations of a UK Business Studies degree had been fulfilled; many of the results from graduates, employers and consultants indicated that they had not. An important benefit of this thesis is that it was conducted with graduates, interviewed in their home country of Nepal, who are now in their early years of employment.

In interviews with Nepalese education consultants, graduates and employers, concerns were raised over the reputation of the UK higher education sector. The closure of many private colleges offering a pathway to UK degrees, “stranded students and staff hit by the crackdown on 'bogus' colleges” (Shepherd, 2012, p. 1). The cancellation of the UK’s two-year post-study work visa in 2012 for non-EU international graduates has resulted in several negative effects including loss of income for education consultancies. The two-year post-study work visa was seen from interviews with employers and graduates to afford valuable work experience in the UK, making UK higher education attractive to overseas students. Since the cancellation education consultancies have added universities from other countries to their portfolio to reduce their loss of income. Data also indicate that greater numbers of Nepalese students are choosing to study in the US or Australia instead of the UK.

7.2 Adding graduate reflection into the mix of student research

The use of graduates in this thesis afforded opportunities for reflection when evaluating the longer-term benefits of UK Business Studies education. This thesis has highlighted differences between the UK student satisfaction surveys, including the National Student Survey, which are undertaken whilst undergraduate students are still at university. This has led to my recommendation for more longitudinal research into the employment benefits of UK education, specifically the benefits of Business Studies education.

7.3 Reputation, quality and reliability of UK higher education

There were some reservations expressed in participant interviews over the reputation and value of UK business studies education. Although UK higher education was highly regarded in Nepal, often as a result of the personal experiences of parents, there were concerns over quality assurance processes in the sector. The poor monitoring of quality led to the closure of many private colleges which had accreditation agreements with UK universities, enabling them to award UK university business studies degrees. This resulted in questions over the quality and reliability of UK higher education, including advice given to students from education consultancies in Nepal as many families experienced financial loss.

7.4 Choosing UK higher education

My thesis has shown that the high expectations towards UK education of the Nepalese business graduates interviewed were supported by their families. The encouragement of family was often because of previous experiences of UK education. The issues around quality and the declining reputation of UK higher education, seen earlier, came about

after the graduates interviewed had completed their studies and returned to Nepal. The continuing motivation for studying business studies at a UK university was seen in high scores on Achievement in Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's' Intercultural Awareness Profiling, discussed further in section 7.12. My thesis has confirmed that the attributes which Nepalese graduates most valued from their UK education were improvements in self-confidence and independent thinking.

7.5 Shortage of graduate employment positions in Nepal

The initial expectations of graduates of more favourable employment opportunities following a UK education continued to reflect the opinions and experiences of their parents. Although positive in their expectations, it became apparent from the interviews with some of the returned home graduates that challenging employment opportunities were not always available. This applied particularly to the employment prospects of graduates without connections to a family business.

The ongoing shortage of graduate positions available in Nepal (Clark, 2013), noted in my thesis, is also evidenced by the International Labour Organisation which found that, "Youth unemployment among university graduates in Nepal is three times higher than among those without graduate education" (2014, p. 24). Nepalese employers interviewed for this thesis attributed the scarcity of jobs in Nepal partly to a lack of investment in infrastructure, including foreign direct investment, resulting from continuing political uncertainty.

7.6 The employer's perspective

Networking and status still characterise Nepalese society and were shown to be determining factors in the selection of employees. The important role contacts and networking played in business was also noticed in the wide-spread influence of family businesses in Nepal and through the close relationships between employers and families. There was criticism from Nepalese employers that there was insufficient information from UK universities available in Nepalese state and private schools on potential job opportunities that individual courses can lead to. The need to supply more detailed course information to students was also noted (BIS, 2011a, p. 6) as a major requirement for universities in the UK. Information should also be available to education consultancies and the British Council for the purpose of advising students planning to study at UK universities. The interviews with Nepalese employers drew attention to vacancies in some technical and professional areas and a need to develop the entrepreneurial skills of graduates by introducing more entrepreneurship courses or modules into UK business studies courses.

7.7 Career progression and realising job satisfaction

The expectations of UK educated graduates were for more favourable employment and career progression which reflected the positive experiences of their parents. However, the findings from my research identified several areas where the expected outcomes from a UK higher education were not fully met. The frustrations of UK educated Nepalese graduates in their employment, also noticeable to their employers, was one of the reasons why both graduates and employers had some doubts as to the benefits of UK education. Failed attempts to influence organisational policy led to this frustration and

graduates were concerned they were unable to use the skills acquired from having been overseas, including competencies relating to problem-solving and managing change.

Employers suggested that UK educated Nepalese graduates needed to lower their expectations for rapid promotion. The result was that home educated graduates with similar qualifications, but without these higher expectations or hopes, were often preferred by employers. The reason given by Nepalese employers for the lower expectancies of Nepalese (home) educated graduates was that a graduate from a Nepalese university would, without the experience or awareness of working practices in another culture, be more comfortable working within the existing cultural boundaries of Nepalese business.

Graduates interviewed said they became frustrated with what they perceived as a negative response from their employers. They were concerned that their ideas for business improvement were not given full consideration and there was evidence of Nepalese graduates returning to Nepal not being prepared for the readjustment to Nepalese business culture. Graduates and employers recognised the need for additional learning to be provided in business studies courses of how cultural differences may impact on management and employer/employee relationships. This has been seen in other countries, for example, in a study of five Chinese graduates returning to China from UK education it was found that, “most had experienced short-term reverse culture shock” and that, “female returnees experienced more difficulties than male returnees in dealing with stereotypes and interpersonal relationships” (Yang, 2008, p. 205).

A possible explanation for the frustration experienced by returning Nepalese graduates was found from the analysis of their completed IAP questionnaires. Feedback to

graduates from the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Organisation explained how a greater understanding of different cultures was important in business, with examples of how response behaviours needed to be varied according to cultural differences in individuals. Importantly, the feedback to Nepalese graduates from these IAP questionnaires gave advice on the way graduates might respond to the differing cultural behaviours they were experiencing from their employer. As this feedback was compiled by the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Organisation, which synthesised results from their global data base model, it removed any possibility of bias in my interpretation. This led to the recommendations outlined in section 7.9 for changing and developing the teaching and learning approaches of UK business studies courses.

7.8 Improving education infrastructure in Nepal remains challenging

Although an improving education infrastructure in Nepal was acknowledged by all participants continuing political uncertainty was still evidenced through strikes and interruptions to studies in many Nepalese state schools and universities. Political uncertainty had led to the expansion of private secondary education in Nepal and these schools built their reputation on curricula that worked towards meeting the entrance qualifications students required for admission to overseas educational institutions including UK universities. There was general agreement in the context interviews and from participants in the main interviews that although substantial improvements had been made to Nepalese education, particularly in the areas of literacy and primary schooling, Nepalese universities were still too focused on teaching traditional subjects and students often had to seek education in their preferred discipline in overseas countries as confirmed by participant FG 03:

“There is this stigma in Nepal still that if you are good in studies, you study medicine, science or engineering. I was very good in my studies. But I wanted to study business administration.”

Participant MG 10 adds:

“My uncle is a doctor. His wife is a doctor and their children are also into doctoring. They are always in that environment. I have an Uncle who lives in the same town. He is an engineer. His daughter/children are talented in studies and they are studying engineering or medicine.”

These citations concerning the continuation of family professions also link back to the importance of family influences favouring UK education.

7.9 Developments recommended for teaching business studies courses

The professional approach of UK universities towards matters such as adherence to semester dates, plagiarism and availability of learning facilities, was highly valued by graduates as a further benefit to studying in the UK. Nepalese graduates and employers suggested that some lecturers involved in the delivery of certain modules on business studies courses delivered to international students did not always have knowledge or experience outside of the UK. It was suggested that teaching staff should adopt a more empathetic approach to understanding the knowledge and skills required for employment in developing economies, seen also in the literature review (Chapter three).

Explaining their concerns further, Nepalese graduates gave the example of their country being at a different stage of economic development to the UK or other highly developed economies. Graduates gave examples of case studies chosen and teaching materials used that focused either on the UK or large international organisations. They felt that selections of case studies should include examples of practice in developing countries that are at a similar stage of development to Nepal (Rostow, 1960). Employers in Nepal

offered to help in the provision of information and even suggested exchanges between Nepalese and UK university staff. They offered the prospect of internships in Nepal to Nepalese and UK students as part of their course. Further research may show that this model has applications for other developing economies. My work has taken me, for example, to countries in Africa where I believe there are similar requirements.

Having researched the reasons why the expectations of all participant groups were not fully realised, implementation of my recommendations (see section 7.14) should help towards mitigating against the negative perceptions of UK higher education found in this thesis. These changes would also help to reinforce the reputation and quality of individual UK universities and, more generally, teaching and learning in UK education.

7.10 The conceptual framework

Identification of themes and associate themes have added to knowledge about the influences on the decisions of Nepalese graduates to study in the UK. The conceptual framework chosen for the analysis of the findings and discussion (chapters four and five) has also contributed further to understanding the complexity of how family, networking and UK visa policy influence educational decision -making.

Specifically, the use of an ecological model of human development has shown how educational decision-making can be appreciated as a series of interlocking decisions dependent one on another. This was seen within the Process - Person - Context - Time (PPCT) model developed by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998). Tudge et al. (2009) examined 25 papers published since 2001, all explicitly described as, “being based on Bronfenbrenner’s theory” (p. 198). Tudge et al (op. cit.) were able to show that, “all but

four rely on outmoded versions of the theory, resulting in conceptual confusion and inadequate testing of the theory itself”, (p. 198).

The research for this thesis used the PPCT model which Tudge et al (2009, p. 199) described as, “the mature model.” The value of analysis in using the Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) model became evident from the linkages found between and within themes. This thesis supports the view of Tudge et al (op. cit.) that Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model of human development has great potential for providing insights into and understanding of decision-making. The influence of parents on the choice of secondary school, the involvement of the extended family as well as of education consultancies in the educational decisions of students are examples of the interactions in the educational decision-making processes of graduates.

The work of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998, 2012) on cross-cultural differences was the second constituent of the conceptual framework used in the analysis of the research for this thesis. The findings confirmed that the work of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner is based around the individual and offers a more incisive understanding of the importance to graduates of cultural diversity in business situations. This contrasts with the work of Hofstede (2001) which compares values, behaviours, institutions and organisations across nations.

The analysis of the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s IAP questionnaires demonstrates that graduates have stronger cultural dimensions towards Particularism, Communitarianism, Specific, Achievement and External. In further research, it may be possible to see evidence of generational differences in dominant cultural dimensions.

Indeed, in my research with a sample size of only 23 out of the 90,000 in Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's global database, it is not possible to generalise.

7.11 Reflections on my personal journey

In Chapter one, I explained that the original inspiration for this 'journey' came from studying the work undertaken in Nepal for the United Nations by Toni Hagen (1988). Keillis-Borok (2014) wrote that Hagen was a pioneer in the field of development aid working as an adviser to the UN's Development Programme. Hagen was widely credited with being responsible for the modern pattern of development aid, which he pioneered in Nepal after his first visit to the country in 1950-51 when working for the last Rana ruler of Nepal. My own interest in Nepal came about whilst working as a business and strategy lecturer and researcher for a global university with campuses in Europe, Africa and Asia which I been doing since 2007. Prior to that I spent 17 years as the Marketing Director of a UK university Business School with responsibilities in teaching and international development. Having also worked in food and beverage manufacturing and engineering, my involvement in teaching and working alongside international students has given me insights into the development of Business Studies which I wanted to research further. My aspiration was that, as a practitioner with over twenty years' experience in international education I might be able to add to the knowledge for UK universities by identifying further influences on educational decision-making. Hence, my earlier career in industry gave me the benefit of insights into working in different cultures.

On visiting universities in Nepal, I experienced the developing needs of the country for myself. I was particularly interested in researching the ways in which a UK Business

Studies degree programme could enhance the employment prospects of returning UK educated Nepalese graduates. My research has shown that many showed commitment to developing their country. Although I considered interviewing Nepalese graduates in the UK who had no plans to return to Nepal, I felt that the reflections and experiences of graduates who had returned home would better enable me to meet the aims of this thesis. From the literature, I also noted that it was still possible to draw on other methods of understanding and interpreting data.

This, to me, became all the more urgent given that numbers of Nepalese students entering UK universities decreased to 450 in 2015/16 from 1,075 in 2014/15, as seen in Table 2, Chapter two. The changes made to the UK's two-year post-study work visa regulations added not only to the complexity of recruiting international students but also limited opportunities for all international graduates who wished to benefit from work experience in the UK before returning home. Interviews with business studies graduates, as part of my research in Nepal, led me to question why relatively few Nepalese graduates return to Nepal after their graduation from a UK university. However, there was no evidence that the graduates I interviewed in Nepal had considered working in another country before returning to Nepal.

The results from this thesis have enabled me to determine and make suggestions regarding necessary changes and improvements to the content of business studies courses that could be implemented with minimum disruption and would increase the prospects for employment in Nepal for UK educated business graduates. I considered this a priority but I also recognised that conducting research amongst graduates who had

chosen a country other than the UK, or remained in Nepal for higher education, would be an opportunity for further research.

7.12 Contributions to knowledge

This thesis has provided a useful addition to the subject knowledge by conceptualising, designing and implementing, through the use of a new conceptual framework, the analysis of data. This has demonstrated a new way of identifying the influences on the educational decision-making and expectations of Nepalese graduates through their reflections of UK business studies courses. Student satisfaction surveys were mainly focused on pre-graduation views but my research confirmed that influences on educational decision-making in Nepal were multi-faceted and generational, with respect to choosing the UK for higher education studies. This thesis, therefore, represents an approach which can add to the knowledge of business studies practitioners.

Rounsaville (2011) in using Bourdieu's capital theory (1986) confirmed that it was still possible to add to knowledge through new conceptual approaches. She stated, "there is little evidence at [the time of her research] to support its relevance and generalisability to students from all non-Western cultural settings" (Rounsaville (2011 p. 307). This provided me with insights into the value of working with a new analytical approach to review existing educational decision-making theories.

The use of a conceptual framework based on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979,1989) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) undertaken amongst Nepalese graduates presented a method for developing a deeper understanding of the interlinked influences on the educational decision-making of Nepalese graduates. This came from the analysis

of interviews with graduates, employers and education consultancies. Insights into previously hidden multi-directional as well as interlinked influences, categorised into themes and associate themes, were seen to be acting on the educational decision-making of Nepalese graduates before, during and post-graduation. Political uncertainty in Nepal has been identified in the research as a new chronosystem by showing it to have, “the cumulative effects of an entire sequence of developmental transition over an extended period of the person's life” (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, p. 724). The impact of conflict in Nepal before, during and after the ten-year civil war, has influenced educational decision- making, infrastructure investment and job opportunities in the country. Conflict in education, as seen in Chapter two, remains an important area for further research.

The research shows that a major concern of Nepalese graduates returning to Nepal was inadequacy in implementing their skills and attributes. This led to unfulfilled expectations in their employment situations which must be addressed by UK universities in the design of business studies courses. Graduates mentioned a lack of awareness of knowledge and skills that led to difficulties in handling management of change situations and when managing employees from different cultural backgrounds and differing cultural norms and behaviours. The outcomes of this thesis yielded a valuable contribution to knowledge by providing a reference point for assisting professional practitioners in business studies with the design and delivery of a new, or modified, business studies courses.

Feedback from the analysis of the IAP questionnaires gave advice to graduates on how to manage and respond to cultural difference and behaviours seen in themselves and

their employers. Recommendations and implications for professional practice through adapting teaching methods and materials were given. These recommendations show the importance of considering the differing cultural and environmental backgrounds and perspectives of graduates and employers. The recommendations are therefore focused on helping Nepalese students of UK business studies courses who wish to return to Nepal enhance their employment prospects.

Findings identified that work-life balance was, to the researcher, an unexpected reason why graduates returned to Nepal post-graduation and this offers an insight into the value systems of Nepalese graduates with respect to employment. This knowledge has applicability when finalising terms and conditions of employment with employees from different cultural backgrounds. The values associated with work-life balance for Nepalese graduates were seen within the overall context of family and loyalty to family and family businesses. These values were identified using the Bronfenbrenner (1979) systems approach. Many of the graduates interviewed had family in the UK working unsocial and long hours resulting in a work-life balance that graduates deemed unacceptable if they chose to live and work in the UK. Faced with this prospect, some graduates interviewed, even those without a family business in Nepal, had opted to return home. This further understanding of work-life balance adds to the knowledge that, in many instances, although graduates appreciated that their education in the UK could lead to improved employment prospects overseas their positivity towards working overseas would not be at the expense of duty and responsibility to family in Nepal.

7.13 Limitations

This study was a small-scale qualitative inquiry enabling a more detailed understanding of the influences on the educational decision-making of Nepalese graduates who had chosen to return home after studying in a UK university. Although the sampling frame used has enabled a range of views to be obtained this has not prevented (Mason, 2002) intensive analysis needed in qualitative research. Unlike quantitative research where statistical sampling for interviewee selection and analysis enable, “you to feel confident about the representativeness of the sample and such representativeness allows you to make broader inferences” (Silverman, 2010, p. 139), there are limitations to any claims of generalising the results of the research for this thesis.

Given that all interviews were undertaken in Nepal, it was explained in Chapter four how as representative a sample as possible was obtained to keep within the necessary time and budgetary constraints of a self-funded project. To ensure that views of graduates from different UK universities were represented, a variety of methods for selecting male and female graduates from undergraduate and postgraduate courses in pre- and post-92 UK universities were used. These included UK university alumni associations, the British Nepalese Alumni Association, Nepalese education consultancies and the British Council in Kathmandu. Employers selected were those of the Nepalese graduates interviewed.

Interviews were undertaken with 8 female and 16 male UK educated Nepalese graduates (undergraduate and postgraduate), 7 Nepalese employers and 4 consultants from two different Nepalese education consultancies. All interviews were conducted in English and the verbatim inclusion of citations testifies to the proficiency of the respondents in

the English language. Conducting the interviews in English was not, therefore, seen as a limitation for any of the participants.

It is not claimed that the results of my thesis apply equally to all UK universities as the sample excluded new universities created after polytechnics were merged into the university sector in 1992 and sampling was purposeful and not random. The researcher was of the view that this sampling method would result in experiential, not anecdotal, views from a representative sample of graduates. All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher and extensively used as evidence of the findings cited in this thesis.

Creswell (2013) states that qualitative research today, “involves closer attention to the interpretative nature of inquiry and situating the study within the political, social and cultural context of the researchers, and the reflexivity or ‘presence’ of the accounts they present” (p. 45). Time was allocated in advance of the main interviewing schedule with the three participant groups to conduct context interviews with a small sample of respondents from business, academic and professional backgrounds. These conversations helped the researcher finalise follow-up questions when issues of culture were introduced, as well as to establish the context for understanding and interpreting the views of interviewees which were based on an awareness of the influences on their educational decision-making and personal experience of UK education.

In the insider-outsider debate, Merton (1972, p. 37) stated that, “The boundaries between the two are both permeable” and in the view of Mullings (1999, p. 338) “highly unstable”. As someone with previous knowledge of business and business studies education I was conscious throughout the study of the need to minimise insider bias.

Whilst useful for deeper questioning of participant responses, I did not see this as a limitation to my research as I was following the advice of Unluer (2012, p. 1) in that my current role as a lecturer working with undergraduate and postgraduate students, “could add to credibility” for making recommendation to practitioners in business studies education.

To further minimise bias, it was a mandated requirement that assurances were given to the ethics committee of my university that all respondents gave their written permission for interviews to be undertaken and that all interviews would be undertaken by myself. A decision was also made to include perspectives from three participant groups with analysis, incorporating a conceptual framework benefitting from the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). Working with their proven models has enabled myself, as the researcher, to make a more informed analysis of the data generated.

I chose not to involve the participants in the analysis of the findings although I was aware of the view of Cottrell (2008) that any interpretations were less likely to be fully reflective of the views of participants’ experiences. However, I did include at the end of each interview the opportunity for participants to check that any inputs from myself were accurate and transcriptions were made from the recordings by myself. The transparency of the analysis seen in Chapter four (Findings) and Chapter five (Discussion) enables others to assess the quality of the research methodology and judgement of the researcher.

As the researcher I also gave an assurance to the ethics committee of my university that I had no previous knowledge of any of the interviewees which might influence my interpretation of their answers. These assurances were accepted in the successful

application to my university for ethics approval of the research design, methodology and approach.

All interview transcripts and questionnaires were anonymised and anonymising of the graduates' completed IAP questionnaires before analysis meant that it was not possible to link the dominant cultural difference(s) of each graduate to their interview transcript. Use was made of a numerical analysis of the results of the IAP questionnaires in the overall findings and discussion of data in chapters five and six to give further import to the individual components of themes and associate themes in Chapter five. IAP questionnaires were not completed by employers, given the limited time available and the fact that Nepalese managers were already contributing to the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner database. This may offer an opportunity for further research.

7.14 Recommendations

Concerns were raised by both Nepalese graduates and their employers that in the context of business studies courses attended in the UK, expectations were not fully met. These recommendations address those concerns and, based on the type of business studies course studied, aim to develop the confidence of Nepalese graduates, employers and education consultancies in the value of UK business studies education.

It is recommended that information on new courses and/or changes to existing courses should, where possible, be made available to all Nepalese state and private schools, the British Council in Nepal and education consultancies in Nepal, using print, the internet and social media. This would support one of the recommendations made to universities

in the BIS (2016) White Paper. Information could also be developed through Unistats, the website for comparing UK higher education course data (Unistats, 2017).

The findings from this thesis have confirmed through the analysis of IAP questionnaires that graduates returning to work in Nepal need a thorough understanding of how to interpret and respond to the cultural differences of individuals, particularly their employer. It is recommended that in any business studies course offering an internship, students must be given the option of successfully completing at least one module that addresses issues of working and managing in different cultural environments before undertaking their internship.

The findings from the research add to the work of Lynch (2015, p. 8) in that universities must do more, “to ensure that lecturers appreciate the practical pedagogic consequences of internationalisation. English language teaching centres have a key role to play here.” This leads to the first recommendation that, where not currently available, universities should follow the example of Edinburgh University, (Lynch 2015, p. 8) by offering, “professional development sessions, led by English language specialists”. These sessions would address the core requirements for teaching international classes as detailed later in section 7.15 on implications for professional practice.

Also evidenced in the findings from this thesis was the need for UK and Nepalese Universities to offer lecturers contributing to international business modules more opportunities to increase their experience of international business. Their lack of international experience was a finding seen as negative in many of the interviews including these comments from participant FG 02:

“They tend to send children abroad because they think it is better to get, expose them to an international degree...but were teaching us the environment of other countries, it would have been better if they had taught us something that was more relevant that focussed more back to Nepal.”

It is recommended, as originally suggested in the context interviews, that UK and Nepalese universities develop teaching exchanges and research links. The practice of offering teaching exchanges is well established and given that courses are delivered in English in many Nepalese universities, proficiency in Nepali would not normally be a requirement for UK staff. The model developed for school teachers to apply for post-to-post exchanges in the Commonwealth Teacher Exchange Programme (CTEP) (CYEC, 2017) may provide a starting point for discussion with partners in Nepal and beyond.

In addition to or as an alternative to teaching exchanges between UK and Nepalese universities it is evident that there are opportunities to benefit from UK educated Nepalese graduates who have taken up positions in Nepalese colleges or universities, as participant FG 02 states:

“Yes, the reason I got this job here in this college is because I am an alumnus of the xxx University. This is the first year this college is in a partnership college with xxx (UK University).”

It is recommended that UK and Nepalese universities should, at the first available opportunity, develop and exchange teaching materials, including case studies, to build graduates’ knowledge of how implementation of business decisions may contrast between the UK and Nepal. This can be trialled through workshops discussing case studies or viewing lectures between participating universities. Costs can be kept to a minimum by using VLEs or free online social media conferencing tools. This method would minimise costs for ongoing agreements with participating universities.

To minimise set-up costs, negotiations between UK and Nepalese universities could take place around the time of British Council exhibitions in Nepal or when university staff are in India would allow time to visit universities in Nepal. The British Council in Kathmandu should also be advised of any plans as their help would be invaluable for any UK university having no previous experience of working in Nepal or with Nepalese universities.

Cancelling the UK's two-year post-study work visa has meant that Nepalese graduates are no longer able to gain work experience in the UK. Internships were suggested by Nepalese employers as a means to fill the vacuum left by this change. This possibility should be explored through collaborations between Nepalese and UK universities pooling their connections with employers and the British Nepalese Alumni Association along with input and advice from The British Council. Networking between employers is likely to ensure widespread awareness of such schemes and would help suitably qualified applicants for positions meet the expectations of employers as participant EMP 02 states:

“What I have noticed is that people that have done the MBA in the US do have a few years of experience but there are a lot of universities in the UK who are taking people without experience.”

Discussions should commence between UK universities and representative of Nepalese employers to develop new, or add the option of an internship to UK business studies degree programmes. In the UK, this would normally be the third year of a four-year full-time UK undergraduate programme. Academic supervision of project work could be written up and contribute towards the dissertation credit. A third-year supervised internship would cause minimum alteration to university calendars and give time for

placement staff to find or add to existing internship providers in their respective countries.

Concurrently, the same recommendation is being made to Nepalese universities which would similarly facilitate a one academic year, supervised work experience programme on undergraduate business studies programmes. UK business studies students would have the opportunity of completing their internship in Nepal, enabling them to gain work experience in their home or, if offered to all students, an overseas country. Similar recommendations are being made for 6 month or one-year internships on postgraduate business studies courses.

In both the UK and Nepal the final responsibility for credit awarded for the dissertation or equivalent would rest with the degree awarding institution that the student is registered with. The help of the British Council and alumni in Nepal should be sought in finding employers willing to offer local internships. Ideally internships in Nepal should be found in sectors of the economy which offer the greatest support for early career development.

The idea for local internships was welcomed, as evidenced from this contribution by an employer and former Nepalese university manager, participant EMP 03:

“Yes, but you should arrange internships for the local companies not the multinationals. This would help them get experience and benefit local companies.”

The experience of both the student and lecturer could be incorporated into any course evaluation. This model can be applied to many countries affording more opportunities for lecturers to develop their international experience. The changes being proposed to UK business studies courses would attach more importance to how the attributes and

skills gained from a UK education is transferable to Nepal and potentially other countries.

The introduction of internships for students in either country would also add to the attractiveness of Nepalese students studying in the UK and restore one of the principal reasons why Nepalese education consultancies are offering courses in countries where work experience opportunities are still available or are included through internships as an integral part of the programme.

The vacancies in some technical and professional areas that Nepalese employers referred to in the findings of the research for this thesis are confirmed in an EIU (2015) report for the British Council. They noted that graduate unemployment in Nepal was greater than 20% in 2014/15 and that the lack of technical and soft skills was leaving, “businesses yearning for more” (Khan, 2015). They stated, “Businesses are just as concerned about poor English communication, interpersonal and problem-solving skills as they are about subject matter training (EIU, 2013, p. 1). The EIU’s recommendation that the development of these skills must be undertaken in partnership between institutions and the private sector, with increasing scope for shared learning experiences, although directed towards Nepalese policy makers, also leads to the recommendation that UK universities can play their part by introducing or expanding their courses and publicising professional courses that also attract credits for further studies. An example for accountancy is mentioned by participant EMP 01:

Students with the full ACCA and membership can enter a professional MBA which gives exemptions for their finance and accounting.

Course descriptions were said by employers and education consultancies to be inadequate, despite the recommendations made by the Quality Assurance Agency. It is

recommended that all course materials should emphasise how the knowledge and skills developed from business studies courses can lead to, or has led to, employment of UK educated Nepalese graduates on their return to Nepal. Recommendations from alumni were said to be particularly valuable to education consultancies and in providing information to students at events organised through the British Council in Nepal.

The case for giving more attention to building entrepreneurial skills with students from and returning to a developing economy were established by Naudé (2010). It is recommended that as part of the review of business studies courses, UK universities should ensure that they introduce, or add to, modules in intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship. Consideration should be given to including these areas in the QAA's benchmark statements for Business and Management degrees (QAA, 2017). The learning outcomes specified in the student course guide should include evidence of a graduate's entrepreneurial skills development from internships in commercial or not for profit businesses, participating in charity or community schemes or in the start-up of an organisation.

Given the scarcity of jobs in Nepal noted in the findings of this thesis, it is recommended that during induction and departure briefings there should be more advice on job vacancies in Nepal, a factor to be considered when a graduate chooses module options. This could be made possible by using video with filmed interviews with University alumni who had completed and benefited from their UK university experience with excerpts being incorporated into UK university (or British Council) information on social media sites.

These recommendations have been designed to encourage more Nepalese students to apply for admission to UK universities and for Nepalese employers to employ more Nepalese graduates from UK courses in response to having more specific information on attributes and skills obtained. Recruiting more Nepalese students into UK universities is likely to become more difficult as international competitors move to take advantage of changes to UK Government visa policy that is evidently discouraging applications.

Successful response to the implementation of these recommendations will only be achieved if there is an increase in the awareness of changes made to business studies courses amongst students, employers, the British Council and perhaps, most importantly, Nepalese education consultancies. It is important that information produced clearly evidence flexibility in the construction of course learning and a responsive curriculum.

Where possible publicity in Nepal should be co-ordinated through the British Council and disseminated directly, or through an education consultancy, in British Council promotional campaigns and exhibitions which take place throughout Nepal. This recommendation would also help towards sustaining and improving the working relationship between education consultancies and the British Council.

7.15 Implications for professional practice

The implications for professional practice are intended for a UK university offering business as a subject area to Nepalese and other international students. The following implications are based on the conclusions and recommendations resulting from this thesis.

- Implementing the recommendations in this thesis would always require the Business Faculty to work closely with the Central Management Team of the university in the development of the university's international policy and student support services.
- Responding to the needs of international students identified from this thesis will additionally require the active support of the university's International Office to introduce the recommended changes to business studies courses for Nepalese students.
- The development of these proposals to other cohorts of international students may, depending on the role of Faculty in the university, require the support of the university's Central Management Team and International Office.
- Monitoring and response to the teaching needs identified in this thesis and of Nepalese students should continue to take place through existing regular or annual course reviews.
- Course reviews should include an assessment of the expectations for employment from Nepalese students and Nepalese employers. Information on employment opportunities will come from developing reciprocal working relationships with Nepalese and UK employers on internship programmes.
- Development of fully costed partnerships with Nepalese Universities for introducing and managing teaching exchanges and intra-university student internships. In addition to set up costs there are implications for changes to be included in the regular timetabling of Faculty lecturers and support staff to supervise and manage an agreed internship period. It may also be necessary to seek

approval and validation for changes to the structure of a business studies course through UK procedures for (re) validation.

- There is a need for the introduction of greater cultural awareness in international students and to develop their communication and management skills for employment, specifically in culturally unfamiliar work environments.
- To ensure learning and teaching strategies relate to current policy and procedures for teaching and supporting the learning needs of Nepalese, or other international students. To make the transition as smooth as possible from a graduate's prior learning experiences to those practised by the UK university.
- To ensure additional skills support and/or counselling is available to safeguard the well-being of all international students and to offer support from Business Faculty or University central services staff, to students experiencing difficulties with English language or adjusting to UK study skills and requirements.
- The implications may have applicability to international students from other developing or developed economies.

7.16 Opportunities for further research

The original aim of this thesis was to explore whether expectations of UK education had amongst Nepalese business graduates who had returned home from UK universities had been fulfilled. Employers and educational consultancies were also interviewed to give a more holistic picture to the findings and recommendations. Nepal was chosen as the primary research site for this thesis as it is a country where no previous research studies into either the influences on or expectations of UK education were found when reviewing literature. The findings and discussion of the research undertaken have identified that expectations are not always being fulfilled.

Several proposals are now put forward where further research can add to the knowledge of how changes to a business studies course can help fulfil student, graduate and employer expectations within the context of the educational decision-making process. The researcher believes there is sufficient evidence that the methodology and analysis using the same conceptual framework of Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) is sufficiently robust to warrant undertaking comparative studies in other countries.

The literature review identified the paucity of research amongst returned-home international graduates. Hence, this thesis will help UK universities towards broadening the appeal of (business) courses by having a greater understanding of student, graduate and employer perspectives. Whilst this thesis adds to this knowledge in this subject area, there could be considerable value in adding further to this knowledge by undertaking a longitudinal quantitative survey amongst UK and international graduates. The objective would be to assess the impact on employment prospects of implementing changes to UK business studies courses. This longitudinal study may also add to knowledge of the impact on admissions to UK universities arising from the cancellation of the UK's two-year post-study work visa.

Further research, using the methodology of the Nepalese study, could introduce a sampling framework that includes UK and international graduates educated in UK universities as well as their respective employers. Graduates from several disciplines, including business, could be included and results compared with those from this Nepalese research. It may then be possible to decide whether using this methodology has benefitted the employment prospects of UK as well as international graduates

educated in the UK. Further insights using more detailed information collected by UK universities from their alumni could form part of data returns to HESA for dissemination in the HE sector.

A longitudinal study using as many graduates and employers interviewed in Nepal as soon as possible may also indicate any changes in their views and afford the opportunity of updating information on employers' needs. It is recommended that Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's IAP questionnaires be completed by both graduates and employers in order to add to knowledge on any generational shifts in cultural perceptions referred to in the findings and conclusions of this study.

The number of employers interviewed for this thesis could be seen as a limitation of the research. The seven employers interviewed employed between them eleven of the twenty-three graduates interviewed. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's IAP questionnaires were completed by graduates and their profile added to those Nepalese managers who presently contribute to the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Ltd.'s global database of managers.

A further study would be valuable for making comparisons between graduates and employers and may give further evidence of generational differences between the current global database and younger contributors to the global database. Useful knowledge would be added on the importance of understanding cultural differences in employment.

Through the cultural framework chosen for this thesis, the findings from this thesis have added to the work of Saari and Judge, (2004) by increasing understanding of the

influences on job satisfaction, including recognition of personal performance, of graduates through developing greater insights into their personal and cultural characteristics.

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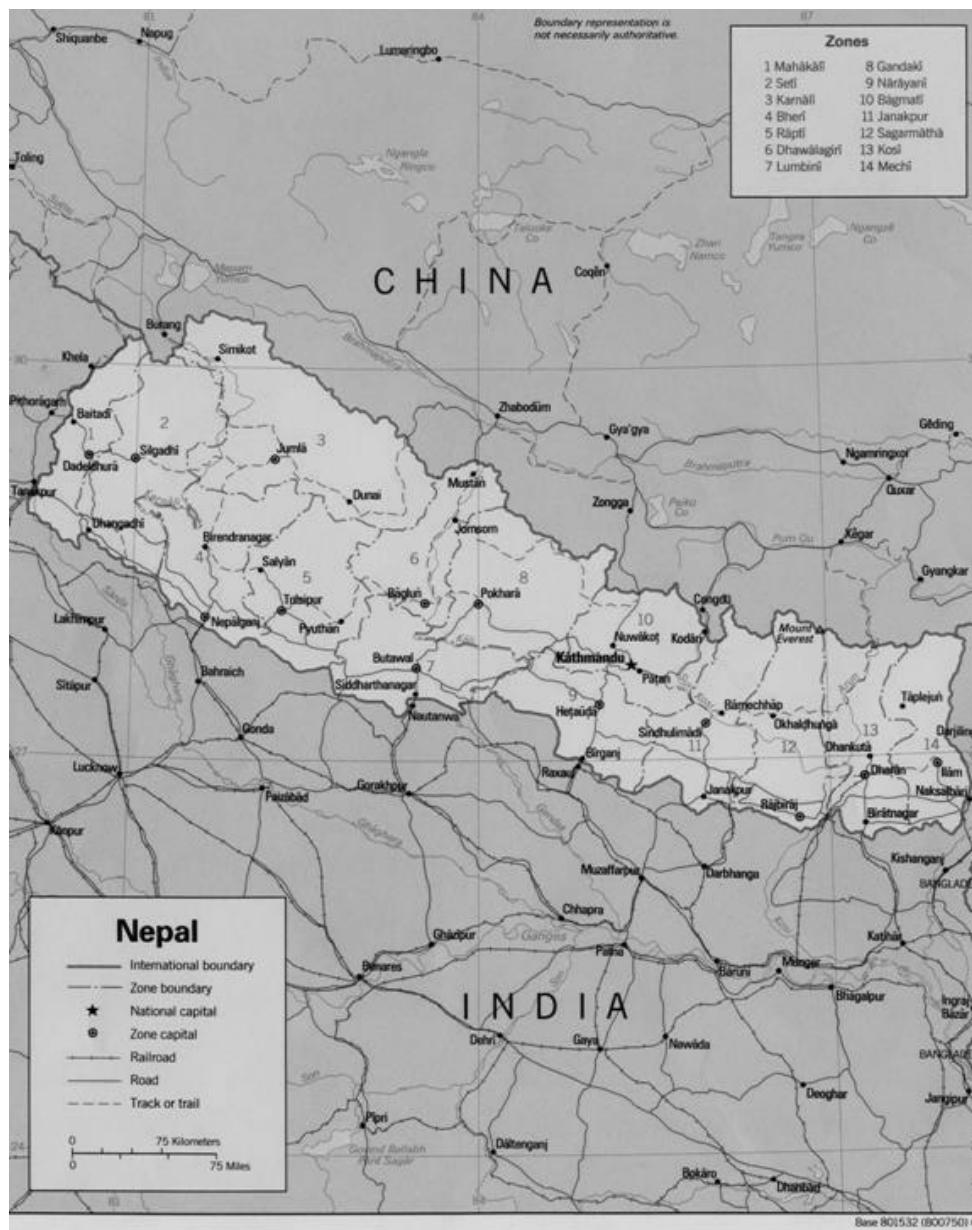
World Bank., 2013c. *Nepal Overview*. [online] Available at: <[http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/Nepal /overview](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/Nepal/overview)> Accessed 30 July 2013.

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Appendix 1: Map of Nepal



Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin

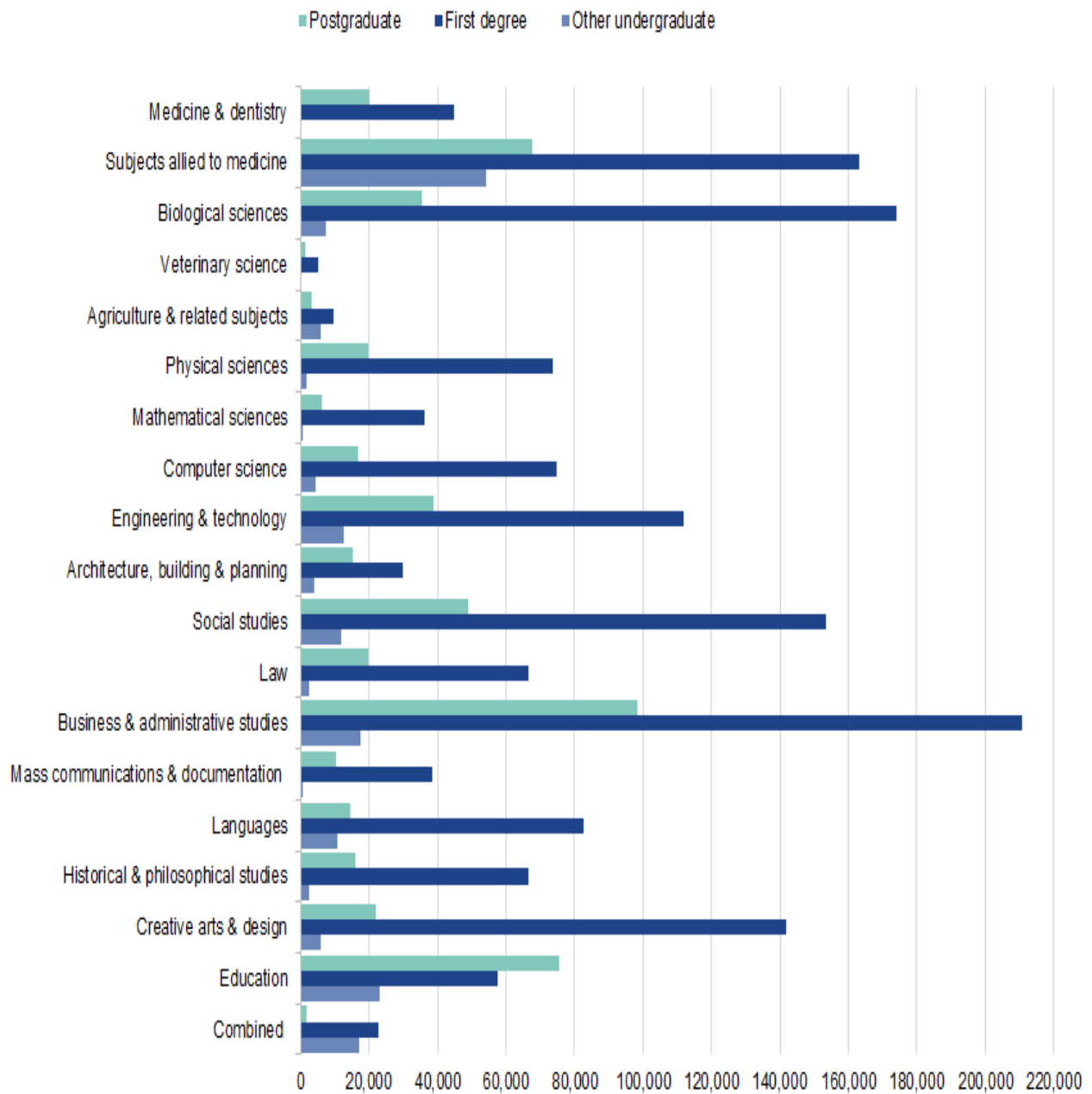
Nepal is a landlocked country, sandwiched between India and China/ Nepal is dependent on its neighbours for international trade and access to the sea. Geography creates a stark contrast between Nepal's borders with its northern and southern neighbours.

Appendix 2: UK Higher Education: Enrolment by Subject and Level of study

(2015/16)

Chart 5 - HE students by subject area** and level of study 2015/16

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** Analyses of subject information show Full-person equivalent (FPE). These are derived by splitting student instances between the different subjects that make up their course aim.

Source: HESA (2017)

Appendix 3: Rating of factors that attract and influence decision-making about a study abroad decision

<i>Factors that attract and influence decision making</i>	<i>Parents</i>		<i>Students</i>		<i>Significance level</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Employment prospects on graduation	1.11	0.40	2.84	0.54	$p < 0.001$
Social and emotional support services	1.15	0.36	1.94	0.58	$p < 0.001$
Range of programs available	1.17	0.38	1.22	0.42	$p < 0.05$
Migration possibilities	1.18	0.46	3.76	0.81	$p < 0.001$
Language and academic support services	1.29	0.62	1.33	0.47	$p < 0.05$
Proximity to home	1.40	0.50	2.14	0.72	$p < 0.001$
Onsite accommodation	1.45	0.50	1.10	0.30	$p < 0.001$
Scholarships	1.45	0.50	2.62	0.66	$p < 0.001$
Cost of tuition	1.48	0.56	3.08	0.92	$p < 0.001$
Relatives and friends living or studying in the area	1.54	0.50	1.59	0.49	$p < 0.05$
English-speaking environment	1.92	0.27	1.30	0.46	$p < 0.001$
International standing/reputation of the institution	2.2	0.43	2.69	0.49	$p < 0.001$
Qualification is recognized in China	2.27	0.45	2.05	0.79	$p < 0.001$
Physical study environment	2.31	0.46	2.10	0.58	$p < 0.001$
General facilities – buildings and grounds	2.32	0.53	1.36	0.63	$p < 0.001$
Cost of living	2.58	0.77	3.52	0.92	$p < 0.001$
International education experiences during courses	3.12	0.70	1.43	0.64	$p < 0.001$
Part-time employment while studying	3.26	0.62	3.38	0.63	$p < 0.05$
Lifestyle of host country	3.32	0.55	2.79	0.67	$p < 0.001$
Visa application and acceptance	3.39	1.34	3.34	0.48	$p < 0.05$
Gain understanding of Western culture	3.52	0.50	3.60	0.67	$p < 0.05$
Range of student clubs and societies	3.61	0.50	3.00	0.00	$p < 0.001$
Level of crime and discrimination	3.66	0.53	3.92	0.27	$p < 0.001$
Climate of host country	3.71	0.45	3.41	0.80	$p < 0.001$

Notes: (1) Variables were measured on a four-point scale from 1 = very important to 4 = least important; (2) Data is presented from the highest importance to the lowest importance based on parent responses; (3) M = mean, SD = standard deviation.

Source: Bodycott (2009)

Appendix 4: Parents' and students' rating of factors that push them to seek study abroad

Key push factors	Parents		Students		Significance Level
	M	SD	M	SD	
An inadequate supply of university places in mainland China	1.33	0.66	2.54	0.50	p>0.001
Improved employment opportunities	1.50	0.69	2.17	0.72	p>0.001
Immigration prospects	1.77	0.91	3.80	0.40	p>0.001
Higher quality education	1.96	0.63	1.00	0.00	p>0.001
Strong economic growth	2.07	0.534	3.54	0.50	p>0.001
Understanding Western culture	2.84	0.840	2.65	0.93	p>0.05
International/intercultural experiences	3.09	0.93	1.50	0.50	p>0.001

Source: Bodycott (2009)

Notes: (1) Variables were measured on a four-point scale from 1 = very important to 4 = least important; (2) Data is presented from the highest importance to the lowest importance based on parent responses; (3) M = mean, SD = standard deviation.

Appendix 5: Approved Ethics submission to the University

Ethics Submission

RISK			REASON			RESULT			RISK MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN		
1	Foreign and Commonwealth advise against travel to Nepal/Kathmandu.	Political instability				Cancellation of project with associated costs to researcher.	1	2	2	Monitoring of F&C information and switch to Cambodia as a contingency (research move from Sept 2013 to November 2013).	
2	Failure to recruit a purposive sample of graduates or employers	Insufficient contacts/preparation				Incomplete research, expenses to researcher	1	1	1	Educational consultant and British Council briefed provisionally from Up and confirmations given with regard to recruitment and costs. Final briefings immediately after Ethics Approval. Permission of employers to interview employees will be sought to minimise any perceived risk to employee. NB I will continue my contact work through University International Offices in UK to find potential graduates as a back up to those recruited from local sources.	
4	Interviews with graduates do not yield answers to research questions. Questions not understood.	Inadequate prior research or cultural factors limit scope or detail in answers				Incomplete information. Very limited analysis of information with resultant poor conclusions and recommendations.	2	2	4	Pilot interview with a graduate has been conducted and results analysed with my supervisor. Led to this recommendation that a 'focus group', is held as soon as possible on arrival to test/modify/confirm approach. Note all graduates will have been taught in English. The Educational Consultant will accompany the researcher in the unlikely event an employer does not speak English.	
5	In country illness, accident to researcher. Loss of passport and/or credit cards/money.	Natural or accidental. All interviewees will be over 18 years old.				Delay perhaps to schedule	2	2	4	Necessary vaccinations obtained and University travel /medical insurance arranged. Interviewing in established premises. Local company supporting researcher and documents/money will be held in their safe. NB Researcher is an experienced traveller in Asia and has his own 'back up' travel and medical insurance. Only scheduled airlines used (probably Qatar or Emirates).	
6	Recorder equipment malfunction (battery, power failure, loss of internet)	Unforeseen, except battery				Re-scheduling but use of note book/research journal.	2	2	4	Interview locations chosen are fully equipped with IT facilities. Graduate interview Locations: Researcher's Hotel or British Council office. Employer interviews in their premises or given same option as graduates. Educational Consultants own premises. Spare batteries will be taken. Transfer of tapes to MP3 immediately after interview to ensure a backup of data. Where Research Journal used as main record, data scanned and transferred to PDF file asap after interview.	
7	Graduate requests an interview location away from chosen Kathmandu locations.	Most unlikely. May arise to suit their specific work arrangements.				Re-scheduling and/or use of note book/research journal	1	1	1	British Council of Educational Consultant offices are being used with brief to hold interview in quiet surroundings. Check of alternative locations via local Educational Consultant before agreement.	
8	Employer requests an interview location away from Kathmandu locations.	Breadth of information e.g. city vs rural employment				Scheduling and potential risk to researcher	2	1	2	All unusual locations will be cleared with the local Educational Consultant. This will extend to travel and venue suggested by any employer.	
9	Confidentiality of data and informant anonymity.	Loss of tapes/records				Breach of Participant Consent.	1	1	1	All interviews will be anonymised at the recording stage. Any data transferred to PC will be password protected.. Tapes will be transferred to MP3 files asap after interview and held on password protected PC and emailed to UK. Any key data in Research Journal will be scanned and emailed to UK (as PDF) to be held on password protected PC. (In office under supervision of my wife, Carol Gilliam (ex course administrator Bucks New University with considerable IT skills).	
10	Personal risk -additional issues	Home or local emergencies				Return home or delays	1	1	1	ICE. In Case of Emergency. Spouse: +441xxxxxxxxxx(home). (07748xxxxx mobile). ICE Kathmandu/Nepal. Educational Consultant.	

Appendix 6: Graduate Invitation Letter and Further Information

The Research Project:

‘Student Journeys’

Reflections on studying at a United Kingdom University

Dear Graduate

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

This research is being undertaken by Paul H Gilliam, an Education Doctorate Student of Anglia Ruskin University, UK.

Purpose and value of my study

My study will allow Nepalese students, who have returned home from successfully completing all or part of their University undergraduate or postgraduate business studies course in the UK, to tell their personal stories and reflect on the benefits and limitations of their educational experience in the UK. I would like to interview you either in my hotel in or at The British Council Office in Kathmandu. I would also appreciate it if interviews could be tape recorded to help me retain an accurate record of our conversation.

I would very much like, if you agree, to interview your employer to understand their views on employment of graduates from home or overseas universities. If you can agree to this I would write, as a matter of courtesy to your employer advising them that, subject to their agreement, I would be interviewing you. Hopefully they will also agree to be interviewed. Importantly, I will not ask them specific questions about you as an employee. My interest is general issues to do with UK education.

I plan to write up my research in my final thesis towards the award of Doctorate in Education. On acceptance by the University, I will certainly be able to forward you a copy of my final research (normally in pdf format).

Further Information

Your Participation is important to me for this Research Project

I am recruiting a small number of Nepalese students who have studied on an undergraduate and/or postgraduate course in the UK. Previous work has usually interviewed students in the United Kingdom but my research, by interviewing you in Nepal, gives you time to think about and reflect on your experience as well as looking to the future. It's your own personal views that I am seeking and my research has been designed to benefit future students and universities.

It is, of course, entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part in my research. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form.

If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, by completing the section on the Consent Form, and sending it back to the University by post or fax.

What happens next?

Naturally I hope you will take part and if you agree I would like to arrange for an initial interview of about one hour. If there are any issues to follow up I would request a further, short interview. Interviews would be tape recorded and transcribed by myself.

I cannot anticipate any safety issues or other risks involved in these interviews but in the unlikely event of anything going wrong, your legal rights should not be compromised.

I hope that you would agree that a greater understanding of how and why students follow certain educational pathways would be useful both to UK Universities, future students and yourself as you reflect back on what you have achieved and its implications for others choosing to study at home or outside their home country.

Confidentiality

All information collected about yourself will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations) and confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material. Data generated by this study is kept in accordance with the University's policy on Academic Integrity.

Tapes from interviews and notes taken in the course of the research will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of this research project.

Who has reviewed the study?

The research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Anglia Ruskin University.

Contact for further information

If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been or is being conducted, please contact the Director of Studies: Geraldine.davis@anglia.co.uk or write to her at the above address.

Thank you for reading this Information Sheet. I look forward to our meetings.

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY TO KEEP, TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF YOUR CONSENT FORM WHICH GIVES THE PROCEDURE IF LATER YOU DECIDE TO WITHDRAW.

Appendix 7: Employer Consent Form

Appendix 5

Employer consent



Anglia Ruskin
University

Cambridge & Chelmsford

Cambridge Campus
East Road
Cambridge
CB1 1PT

T: 0845 271 3333
Int: +44 (0)1223 363271
www.anglia.ac.uk

EMPLOYER.....

Researcher and Contact Details:

Paul Gilliam paul.gilliam@student.anglia.ac.uk Mobile: (+44) 07799 796289
Paul Gilliam EdD student School of Education, Anglia Ruskin University

Please take time to read this form carefully, together with the Participant Information Sheet

1. We agree to take part in the above research. We have read the Information Sheet which is attached to this form. We understand what our role will be in this research, and all our questions have been answered to our satisfaction.
2. We understand that we are free to withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason and without prejudice.
3. We have been informed that the confidentiality of the information we provide will be safeguarded.
4. We are free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.
5. We have been provided with a copy of this Consent Form and the Participant Information Sheet.
6. We are happy for you to interview one of our employees. Yes () No ()
7. We agree to allow a representative of this organisation being interviewed. Yes () No ()

Data Protection: We agree to the University¹ processing personal data which we have supplied. We agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to us.

On behalf of:.....

Name (print).....Signed..... Date.....2013

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to the main investigator named above. (Please us email, if possible).

Title of Project: Student Journeys: Researcher Paul Gilliam

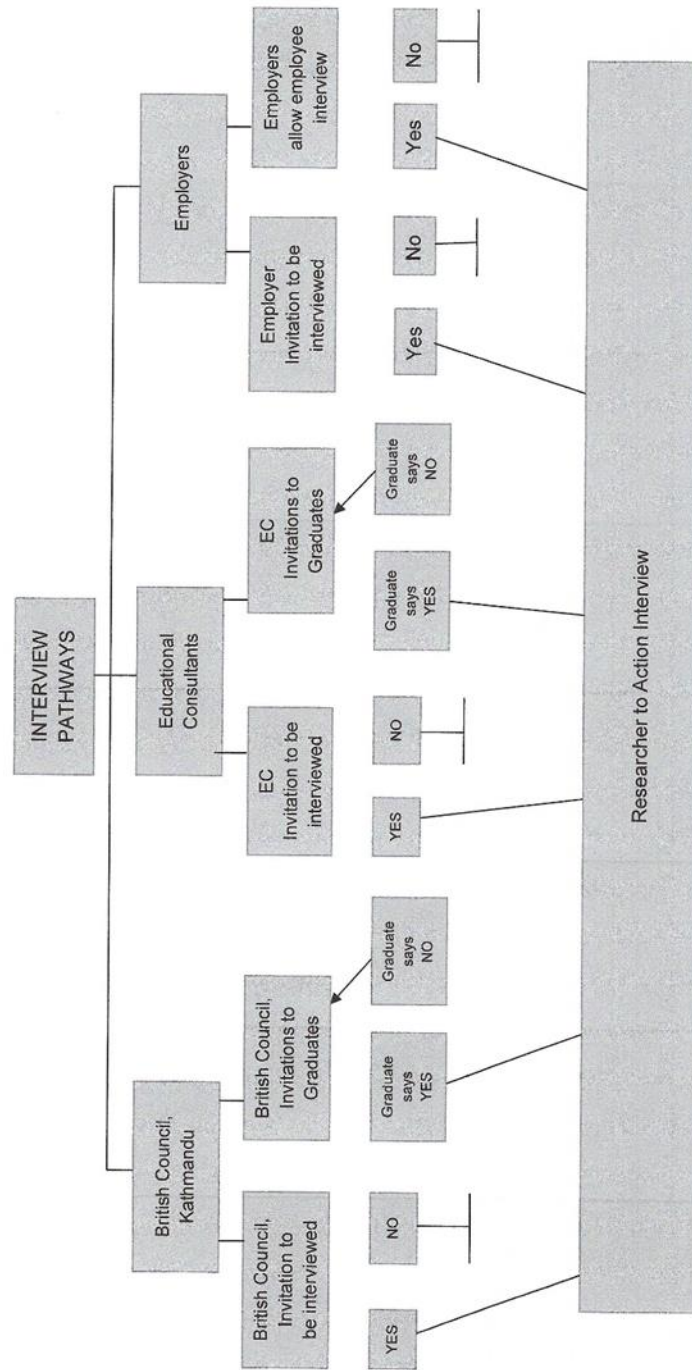
WE WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Signed: _____ Date: _____

¹ "The University" includes Anglia Ruskin University and its partner colleges

Appendix 8: Interviewing Schedule

PARTICIPANT JOURNEYS INTERVIEW DESIGN



Appendix 9a: Question Areas

Following a restatement to participants of the aims of the research from the original signed letters of consent, the following list summarises question areas asked of graduates, employers and education consultants.

Graduates

- (i) Family background, where lived/living (mainly to graduates)
- (ii) Significance of culture and caste in decision-making
- (iii) Influences of Political instability/uncertainty
- (iv) Educational background of graduates (or graduates as employees)
- (v) Processes leading up to decisions about studying overseas
- (vi) Brands and comparative reputations of UK/Nepalese education
- (vii) Role of agents, family, employers in education decisions
- (viii) Expectations and reflections on overseas studying
- (ix) About the curriculum studied
- (x) Employability and employment, employment opportunities. Family businesses
- (xi) Issues around returning to Nepal after studies
- (xii) Summarising and introduction to Trompenaars IAP questionnaire (graduates only)

Employers

- (i) Business sector and background, size, employees
- (ii) Are there differences between overseas and home educated graduates? In what way?
- (iii) Countries graduates sourced from. Any preference?
- (iv) How would you describe the employment situation in Nepal for graduates, home and overseas?
- (v) Do you employ graduates from UK universities? Are there any advantages to your organisation?
- (vi) Courses preferred. Any issues in understanding qualifications of graduates
- (vii) Is there anything about the curricula or graduate skills of overseas or home graduates that is important when making employment offers?
- (viii) Are there any specific skills or qualifications that you look for?
- (ix) Is having a Western educated graduate useful? In what way? Are there any issues in their employment?
- (x) Are overseas educated graduates expecting more? In what way? Is this an issue for you?
- (xi) Opinions of university rankings. Usefulness. Importance of
- (xii) What do you look for in employing graduates?
- (xiii) How do you select graduates? How important is networking?
- (xiv) Types of jobs offered to graduates. Any differences between overseas and home graduates, jobs, conditions, training
- (xv) Why do so many qualified graduates stay overseas?
- (xvi) What type of graduate comes home from overseas study?

Education Consultancies

- (i) Background to their organisation. Size. Sector.
- (ii) Do you have a preference for any particular countries and/or universities?
- (iii) Can you tell me about your role as an agent? (with students, parents, universities)
- (iv) Why do students choose to study overseas?
- (v) How do you select countries, courses, universities?
- (vi) How important are rankings?
- (vii) Why do so many qualified graduates stay overseas?
- (viii) Can you talk about your links with and the role of The British Council in Nepal?

Interviews with graduates were normally undertaken in the late afternoon or early evening to allow a graduate time to finish work. Interviews were digitally recorded and draft transcripts made in the morning following interviews. The duration of interviews was between one and one and a half hours.

Appendix 9b: Interview Guide Sheet (showing prompts)

Student Journeys Interview Guide (for moderately structured interviews)

Graduate Number: { } Date of interview: Location: Hotel/Work/Other

Graduates:

Question Area	Prompts	Notes/comments
Consent given for interview?		
Confirmation of Education ug/pg details		
Processes and influences leading up to decisions about studying overseas	Family, friends, peers, others	
Why the UK, that course and University?	What known about course and university. Reputation Ranking Peer recommends.	Involvement of Educational Consultancies
Family and business background	How long established, type	
Other issues in the decision	Political uncertainty?	Advised in context interviews to ask.
Expectations of overseas study	Yours? Others?	
Expectations of studying in the UK	Yours? Others?	
Thinking back on UK study	Liked, not liked. Reflections. Against expectations.	
About the business studies course studied	Subject Teaching Staff Facilities	
Other issues about the course	Feedback	
Employment working/not working	Type of job	
Family business or other	Type	
Issues of culture and caste in decision-making		

Reasons for returning home		
Views on the impact of UK Gvt post-study work visa policy		Unprompted awareness. Prompted.
Summarising to check understanding (as required)		
Introduction to Trompenaars IAP questionnaire Brief on online return procedure Brief on feedback (from THT Computer centre)		Issues over internet access
Issues arising from the interview which needed further clarification		Views on caste, class and culture

Graduate Number { }.

Interview Notes:

Question Area	Notes

Appendix 10: Preliminary Nodes and Factors in Theme Development

First Coding: Graduate Interviews:

First Coding: EC Education Consultants

First Coding: Employers

One Year Masters UK education	Counselling
Agents	Course Benefits
Ambition	Course pedagogy styles
Attitudes towards education	Course Relevance
Attitudes towards progress	Counselling in schools
Attitudes towards UK	Cultural models and theory
I wanted to go to the UK all my life.	Developing Work Opps in Nepal
Better Life in UK	Developments in Nepal - education
Brand and Reputation	Develops confidence
British Council	Disappointment with UK Education
Building Education Capital	Discrimination
Business involvement	Easy Access to UK Education
Caste and Class	EC attitudes towards UK Nepalese education
Changing Attitudes	EC and permanent residency
Circulatory Migration	EC and the Brit Council
Confidence in English language	EC Benefits of Uk education -work
Corporate vs Private Businesses	

EC Caste and class groups	Education - Private
EC Competition for uk unis	Emp Attitudes towards training
EC Counselling	Emp Brand staying overseas
EC Education a business etc.	Emp caste and family
EC Education changes in Nepal	Emp Cost of internationally educated grads
EC Finances	Emp Course Pedagogy
EC IELTS and issues with BC	Emp Developing job opps internships in Nepal
EC Issues facing uk educated returning grads	Emp Frustrations about political and infrastructure
EC Issues in employment and ingo and ngo	Emp Issues over aid to Nepal
EC issues on courses -implementation etc.	Emp Issues with UK Qualis
EC Issues with ukba and uk visa policy	Emp Issues with US quals
EC Job situation in Nepal	Emp Jobs and opportunities in Nepal
EC Links with UK	Emp Motives for going overseas
EC New English speaking option	Emp Quality of Nepalese PG education
EC reasons for selecting countries	Emp Role of interview in recruiting
EC Scope of business	Emp Role of private schools
EC student frustrations -politics and work	Emp Uncertainty over level of quals
EC students managing change and attitudes	Employing overseas educated grads
EC types of students	Entrepreneurial Push
EC Who goes and finances	Experience new life, culture
EC Why the UK	Experience life in uk
EC Brands	Experience travel, new places
	Experience UK Uni life

Family Background	Lack of scholarships or RA's in UK
Family Businesses	Lost generation old people
Family Responsibilities and Loyalty	Lower expectations
Family status	Managing Change
Finding Jobs in Nepal	Maoism
Freedom	Nepal Business Opportunities
Frustrations in employment in Nepal	Nepalese Identity
Frustrations of Living in Nepal	Nepalese Schools
Gaining work experience	Nepalese University Education
General going overseas	Networking
Going to the UK	New life in Kathmandu
Graduate -work experience	NGO and INGO Priorities and Jobs
Gurkha Influence	Parental Employment
Gvt Schools Issues with	Parental Finances
High Expectations	Parental Influenced in education
History	Perception of people with foreign education
Impact of Technology	PG Subject
Individual or Community Focus	Political Instability - Education
Influence of Geography	Poor country management systems
Influence of India	Pride in Country - Nepal
Interaction with Students	Pride, Motivation, Independence
International exposure	Private Secondary School Influence
Jobs in Nepal	PSW withdrawal
Knowledge of Students	Push from Family

Quality of Life

Reasons for choosing a UK Uni

Reasons for Going Overseas for education

Reasons for NOT choosing UK

Reasons for returning

Reasons for Staying in UK

Recognition of Nepal Qualifications

Relevance of course

Requirements for Careers

Salary levels low in Nepal

Scholarships

Schools and Geography

Social Development and Structure

Strength of Courses

Strength of Family

Student Countries

Target Markets

Too high expectations

Trompenaars Ascription

Trompenaars Individualism

Trompenaars Universalism

Types of Students

Types of unis represented

University Lecturers

Visa Issues

Want Western Culture ways

Wasted opportunities of UK education

Working as a student

WORKING FACTORS IN THEME DEVELOPMENT

Factor 1

Develop Country

Contradictions

Discrimination

Economic mobility

Factor 5

Social mobility

Family. Caste and Culture

Identity

Family Background

Factor 2

Family Businesses

Frustrations

Family Responsibilities and Loyalty

Nepalese politics

Family status

Maoism

Caste and Class

Nepalese schools

Changing Attitudes

Jobs in Nepal and UK

Factor 6

Visa Policies

Influence of..

History, Geography,

Factor 3

Ghurkhas

Expectations

India

International exposure

Factor 7

Overseas education

Business

Career prospects

Family

Life overseas

Corporations

Western life

Government

Factor 4

Factor 8

Ambition

NGO's and INGO's

Factor 9**UK Education**

Agent / BC links

Courses

Pedagogy

Managing change

Lecturers

Confidence

Expectations

Wasted opportunities

Factor 10**Brand, Reputation**

UK education

UK universities

Factor 11**Developing Capital**

Social

Economic

Educational

Confidence

Factor 12**Migration**

Permanent

Circulatory

Factor 13

Employment

Employers

Nepal/overseas

Factor 14**Trompenaars Dimensions****Factor 15****UK Gvt Policies**

Visa

Scholarships

Res Assists.

Factor 16**Networking****Factor 17****Lost Generation****Factor 18****Cost-benefit of returning to Nepal**

Source: Transcripts

Appendix 11: Developing Themes and Associate Themes

Preliminary categorisation into 26 themes from graduate transcripts

	Initial Themes	% of mentions
1	Family loyalties	6
2	Parental influence	7
3	Family Business	12
4	Family connection with UK	5
5	Importance of Nepalese business connections	4
6	Unrealised expectations/frustration	2
7	Expectations/Dreams	3
8	Cultural traditions (compliance)	5
9	Influence of caste and class	7
10	Education school-private	4
11	Education school-state	2
12	UK University reputation	5
13	Developed good English in Nepal	2
14	Poor quality/relevance of Nepalese Universities	2
15	Going overseas to study	6
16	Reasons for returning home	4
17	UK Curriculum/skills/confidence	6
18	Non-relevance to Nepal of UK curriculum	4
19	Political uncertainty	4
20	Employment/employability	5
21	Opportunity	3
22	National pride (Developing Nepal)	2
23	Independence	2
24	Visa withdrawal by UK Government	5
25	Prestige of Ghurkhas	2
26	Agent/BC influence	3

Source: Interview transcripts

Appendix 12: Reduction process from 26 to 8 themes

Initial Themes		Theme	% Mentions
Family loyalties Parental influence Family business Family connections to UK Family and networking	1	Family	33
UK curriculum Employability and employment UK university reputation	2	Curriculum and Employment	16
Expectations (Fulfilled and unfulfilled) Unrealised expectations and frustrations Political uncertainty	3	Expectations	25
Influence of cultural and caste traditions Ghurkha influence	4	Culture and caste	10
Private secondary schools in Nepal English language skills State schools in Nepal Perceived poor quality of Nepalese universities Limited choice of courses	5	Nepalese education	10
UK Visa policy Post-study work visa	6	UK Government policy	5
Influence of educational consultancies/agents The British Council	7	Educational consultancies and The British Council	1
Returning home Helping to build/rebuild country	8	Returning home	*

Source: Interview Transcripts

Appendix 13: Development of Themes (sub-set Graduate Transcripts)

- a) All graduate
- b) Male ug
- c) Male pg
- d) Pie chart used in theme development

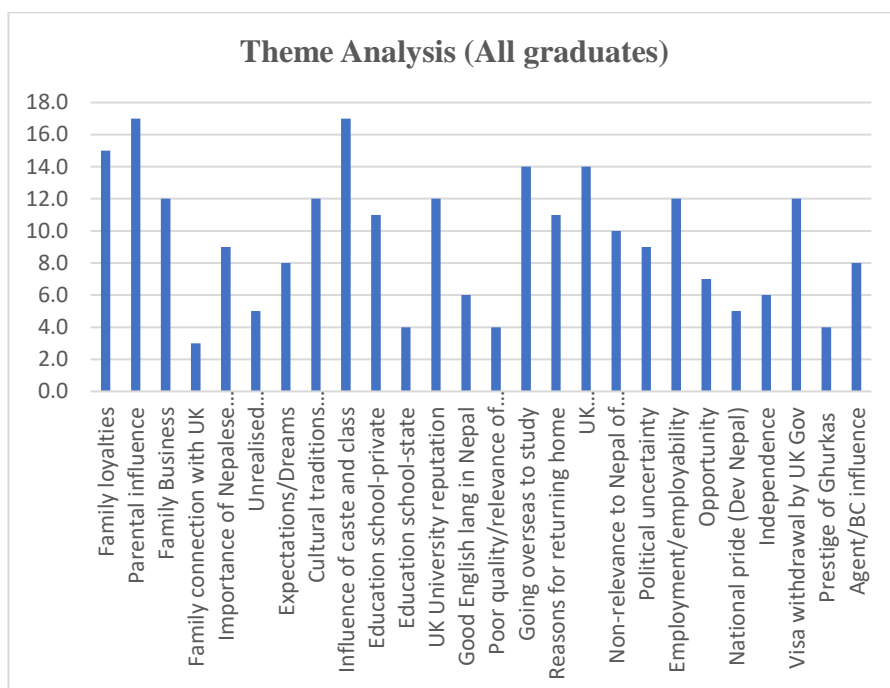
Development of Theme 5 (Intrinsic Influences) and Associate Theme (Caste, Class and Culture)

Associate Theme: Caste, class and culture

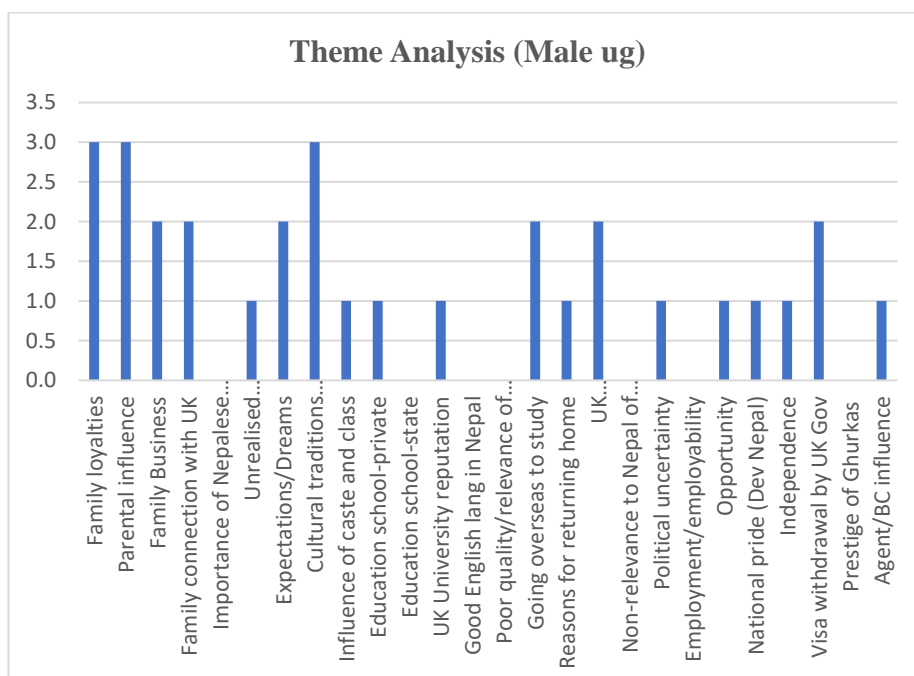
- (i) Analysis from Graduate transcripts
- (ii) Analysis from Education Consultancy transcripts
- (iii) Analysis from Employer transcripts

Development of Themes (sub-set Graduate Transcripts)

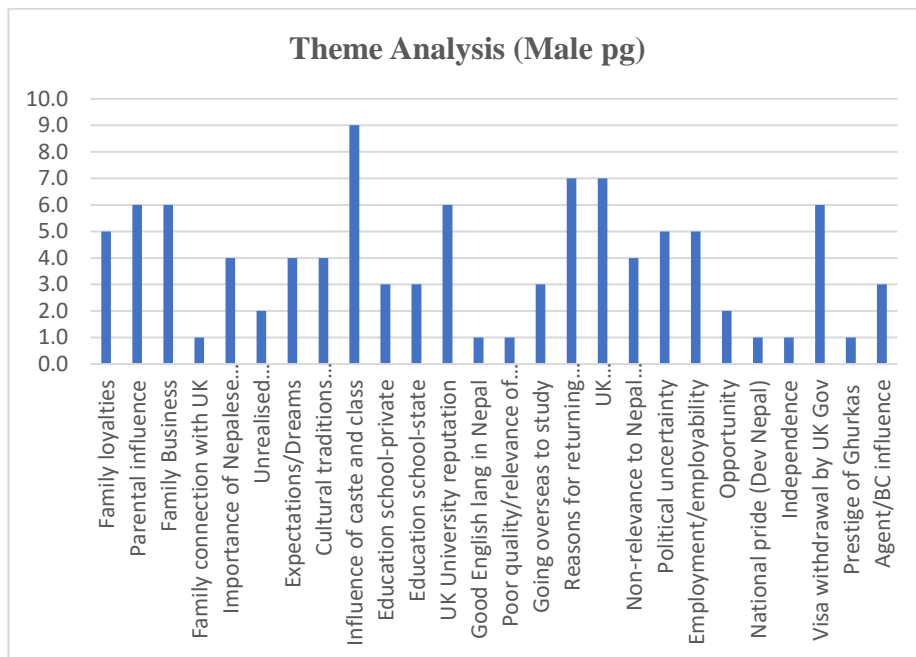
a) All graduates



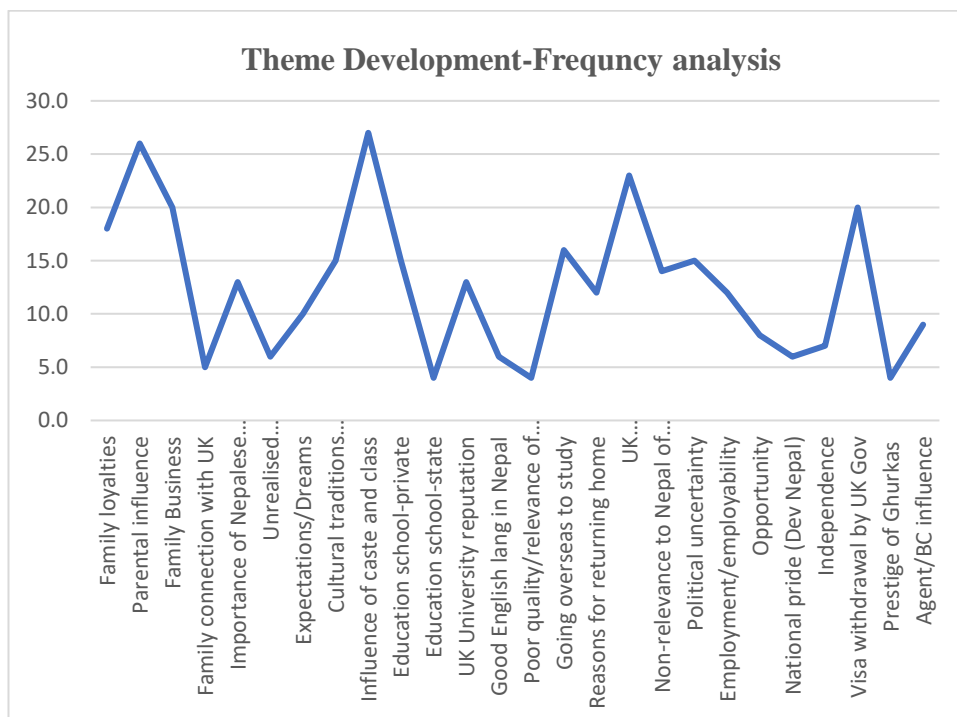
b) Male ug



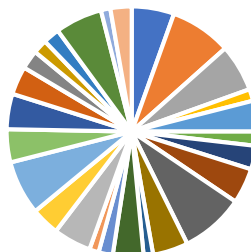
c) Male pg



d) Graphical representations used in theme development



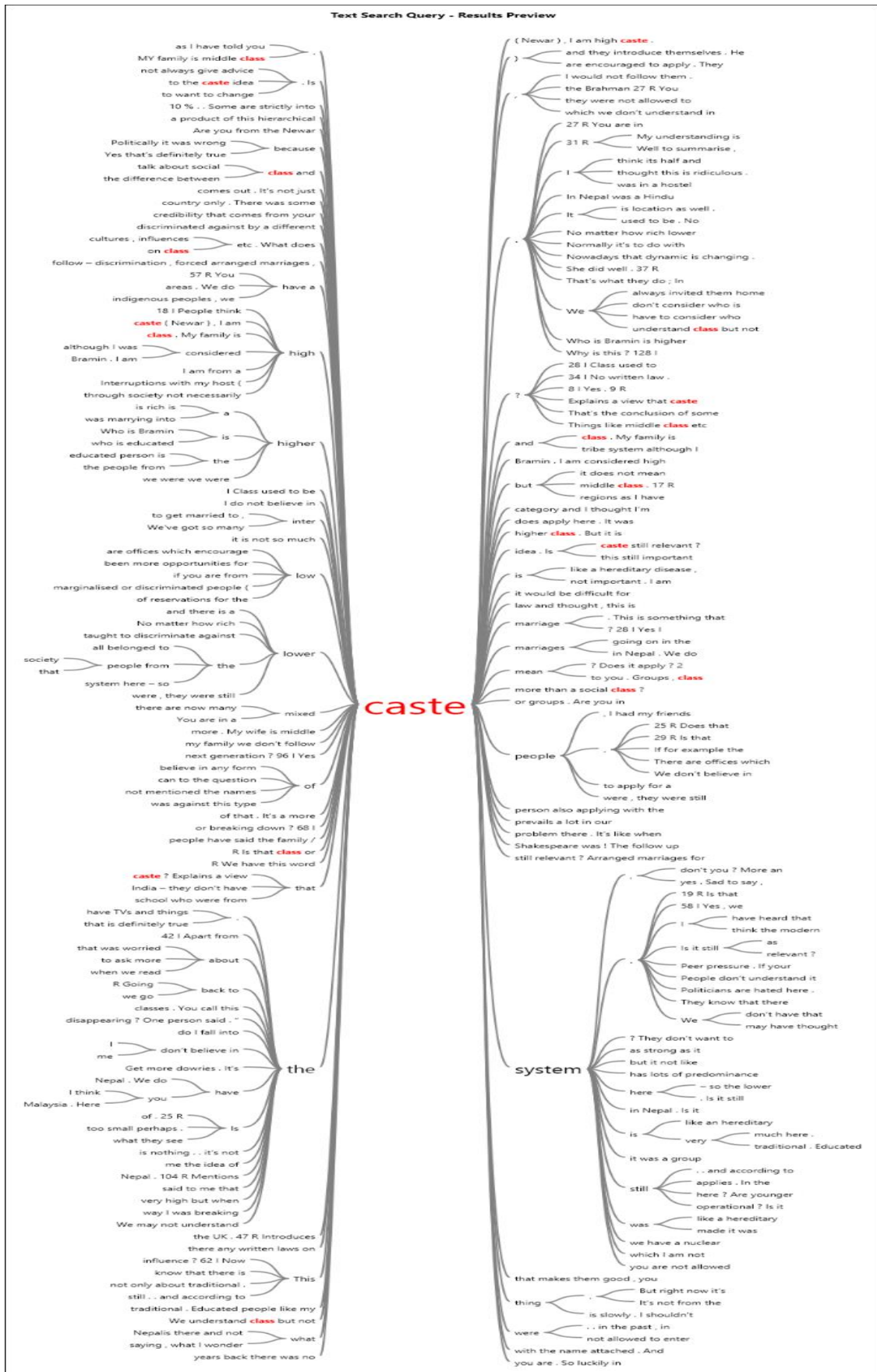
Theme Development -Pie Chart)



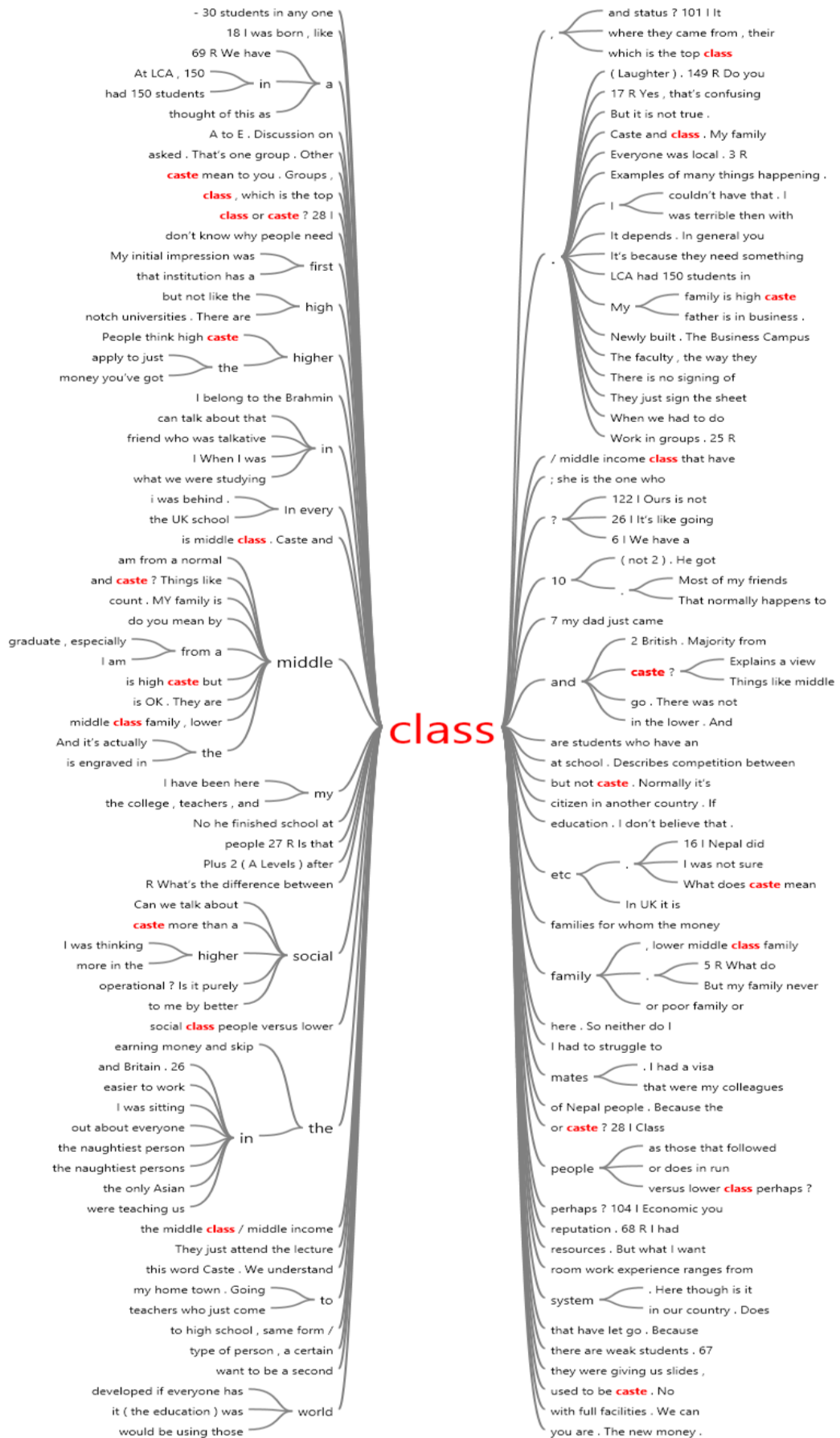
- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Family loyalties | ■ Parental influence |
| ■ Family Business | ■ Family connection with UK |
| ■ Importance of Nepalese business connections | ■ Unrealised expectations/frustration |
| ■ Expectations/Dreams | ■ Cultural traditions (compliance) |
| ■ Influence of caste and class | ■ Education school-private |
| ■ Education school-state | ■ UK University reputation |
| ■ Good English lang in Nepal | ■ Poor quality/relevance of Nepalese Uni's |
| ■ Going overseas to study | ■ Reasons for returning home |
| ■ UK Curriculum/skills/confidence | ■ Non-relevance to Nepal of UK curriculum |
| ■ Political uncertainty | ■ Employment/employability |

Source: Graduate transcripts

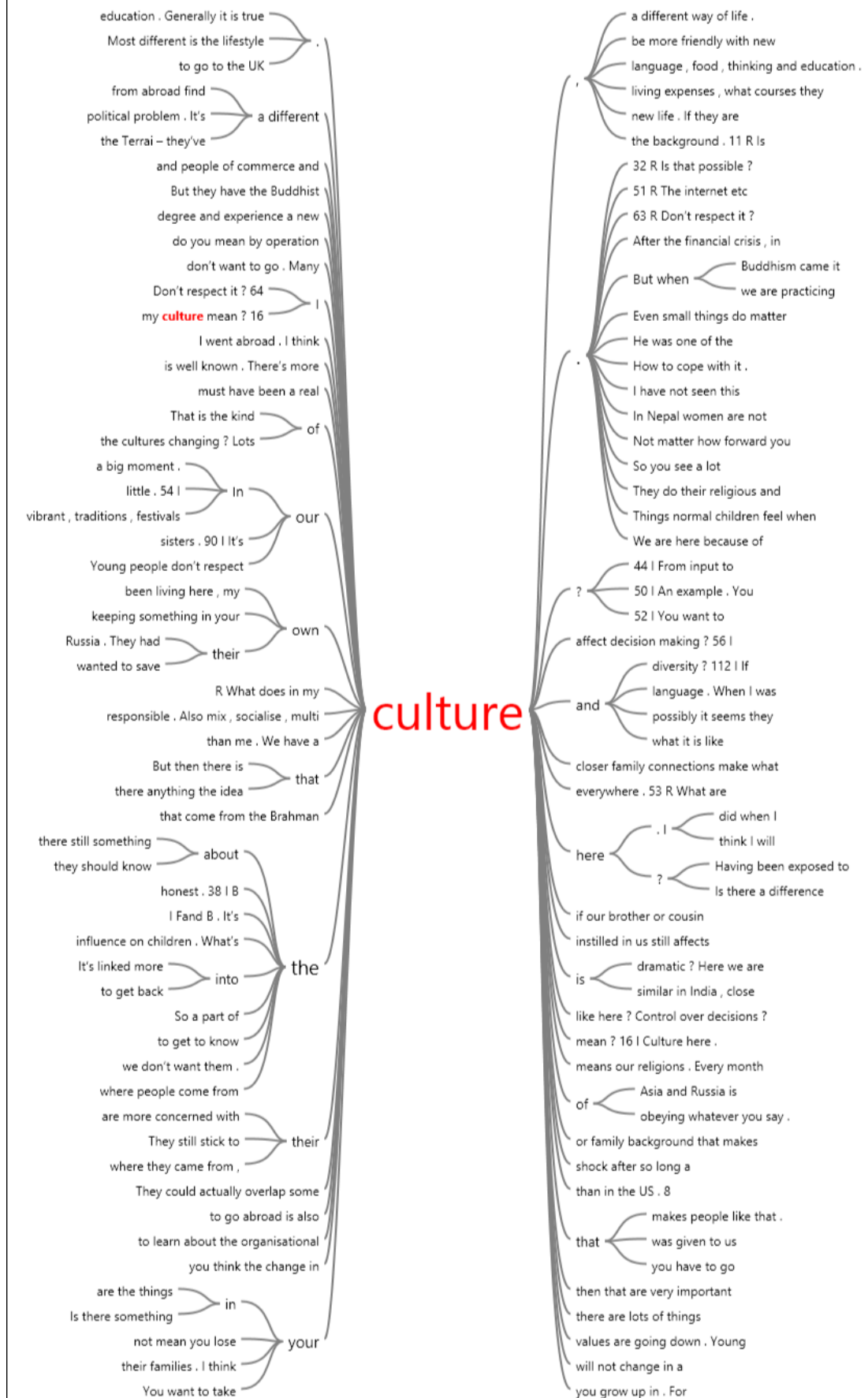
Caste, Class and Culture: Analysis from Graduate transcripts



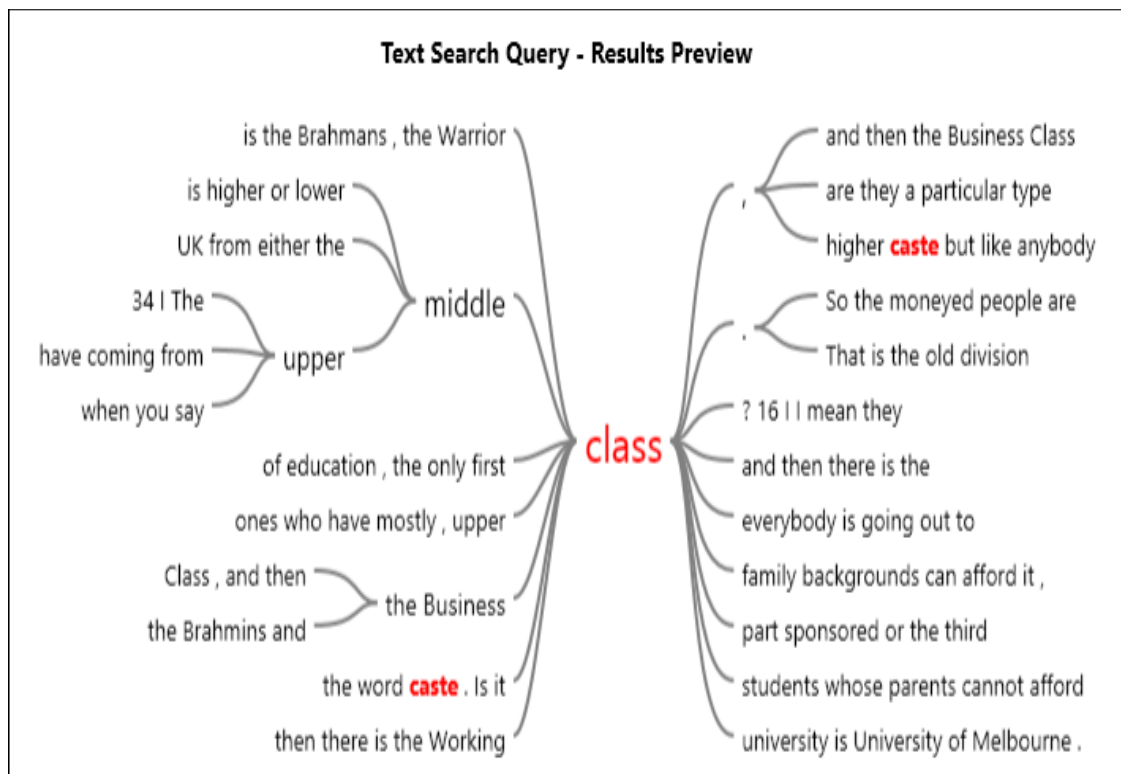
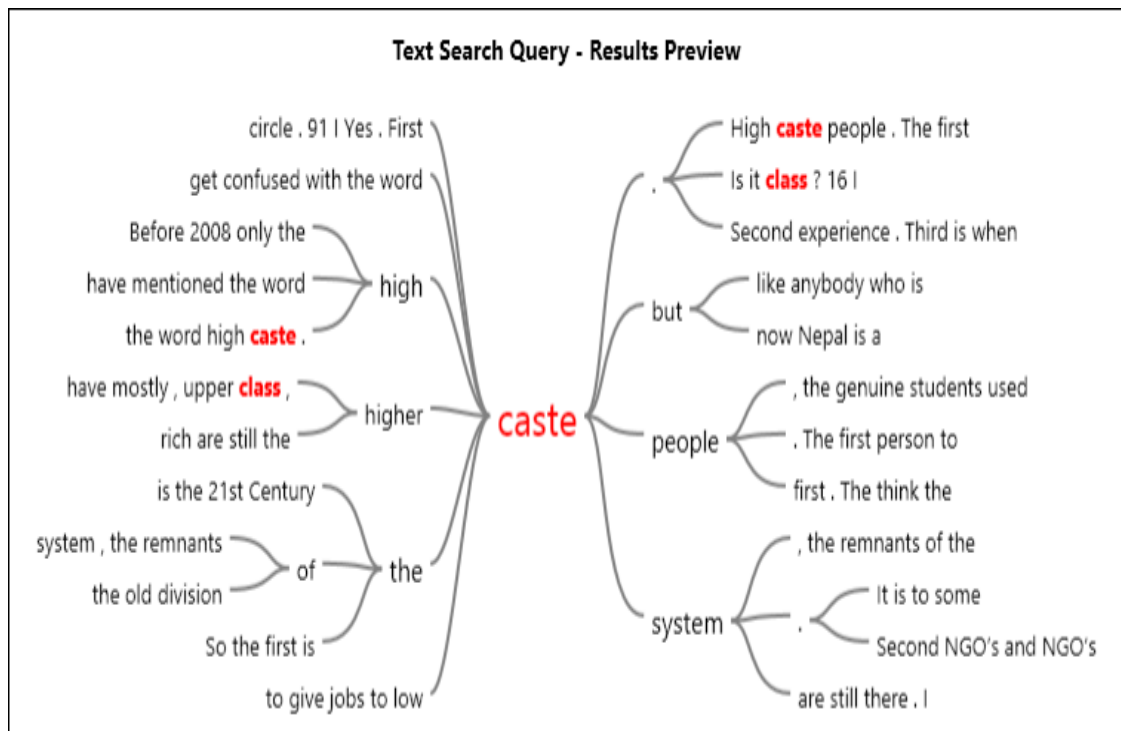
Text Search Query - Results Preview



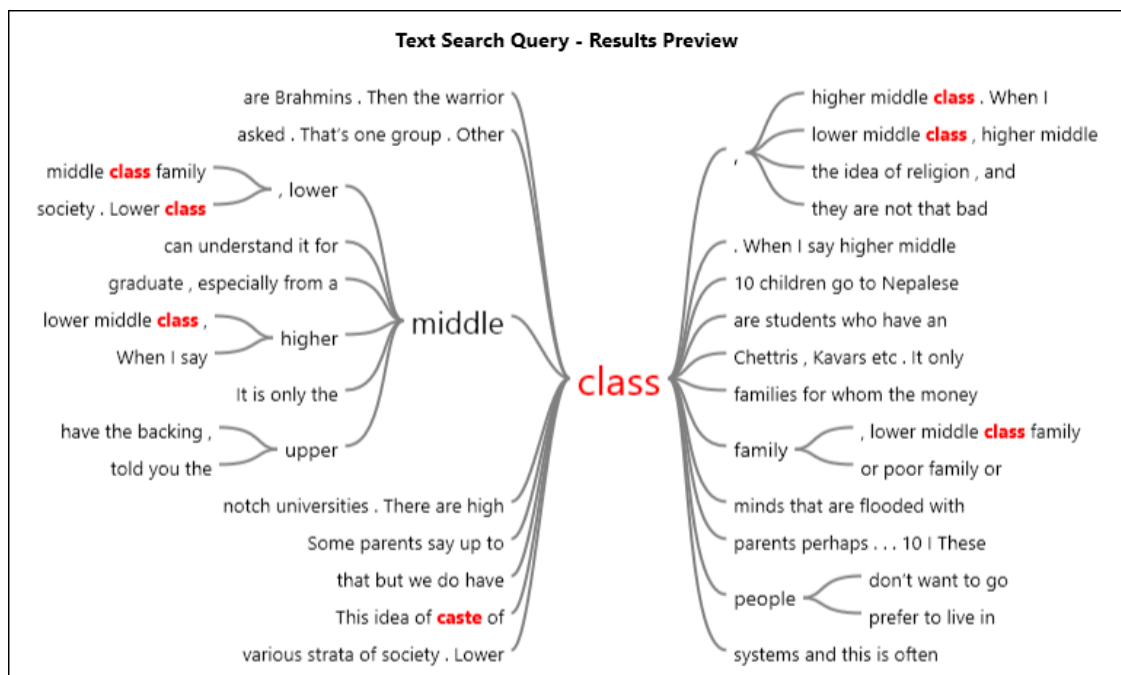
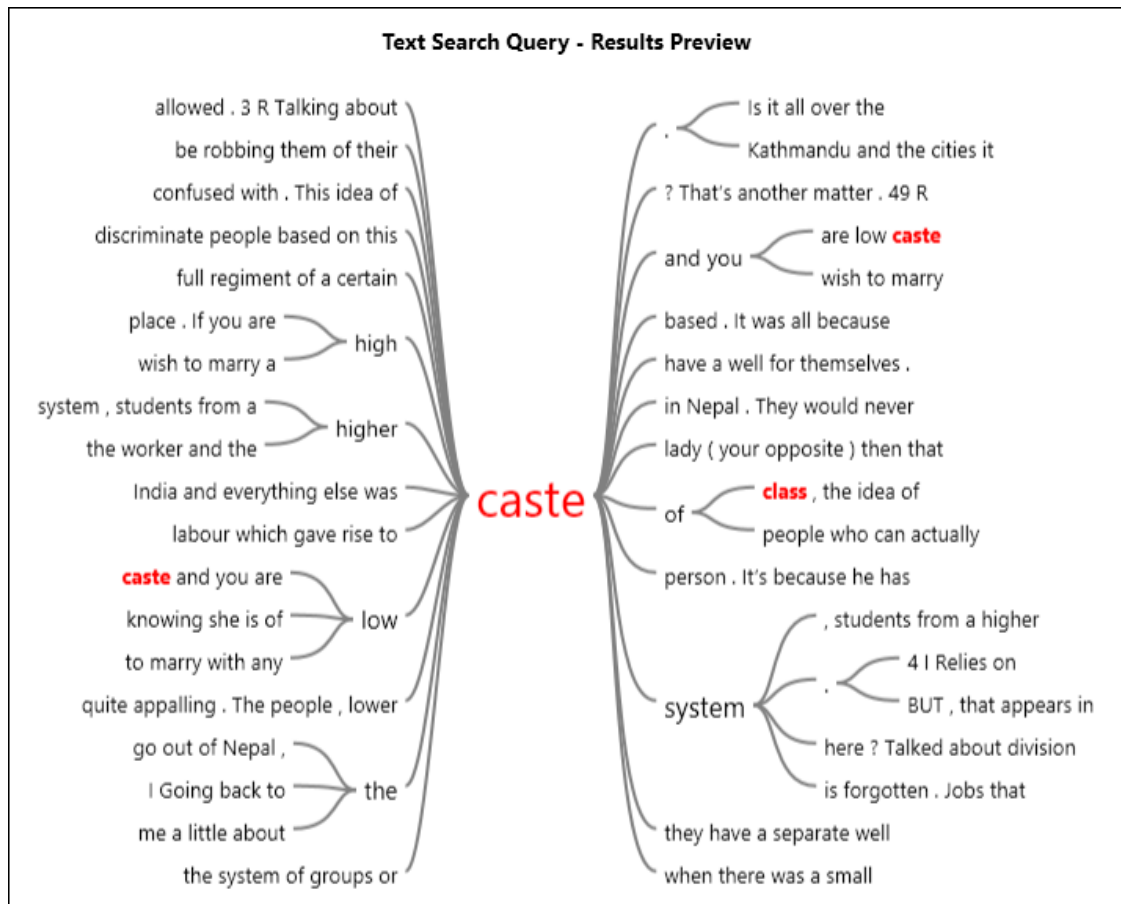
Text Search Query - Results Preview

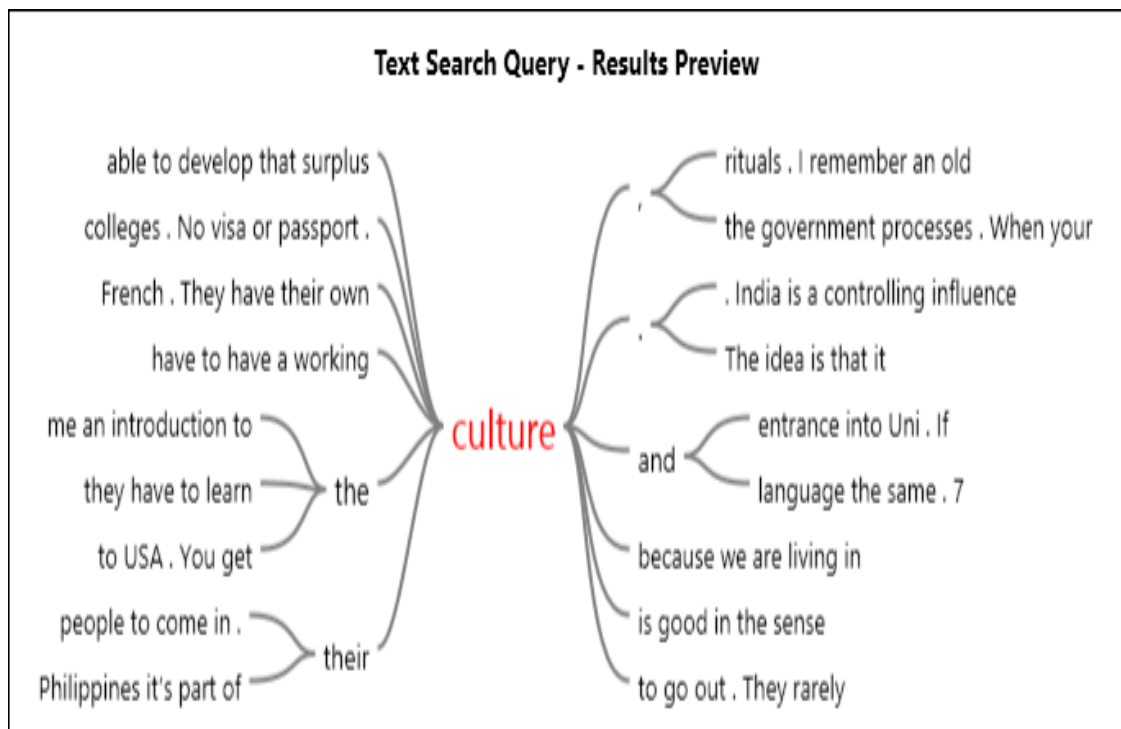


Caste, Class, Culture. Analysis from Education Consultancy transcripts



Caste, Class, Culture. Analysis from Employer transcripts





Source: Interview Transcripts

Appendix 14: Main Nepal Caste and Ethnic Groups with Regional Divisions and Social Groups from the 2001 Census

Main Caste/Ethnic Groups (7)		Caste/Ethnic Groups with Regional Divisions (11) and Social Groups (103) from 2001 Census	
Caste Groups	1. <i>Brahman/Chhetri</i>	1.1 Hill Brahman Hill Brahman	
		1.2 Hill Chhetri Chhetri, Thakuri, Sanyasi	
		1.3 Tarai/Madhesi Brahman/Chhetri Madhesi Brahman, Nurang, Rajput, Kayastha	
	2. <i>Tarai/Madhesi Other Castes</i>	2.1 Tarai/Madhesi Other Castes Kewat, Mallah, Lohar, Nuniya, Kahar, Lodha, Rajbhar, Bing, Mali, Kamar, Dhuniya, Yadav, Teli, Koiri, Kurmi, Sonar, Baniya, Kalwar, Thakur/Hazam, Kanu, Sudhi, Kumhar, Haluwai, Badhai, Barai, Bhediyar/ Gaderi	
	3. <i>Dalits</i>	3.1 Hill Dalit Kami, Damai/Dholi, Sarki, Badi, Gaine, Unidentified Dalits	
		3.2 Tarai/Madhesi Dalit Chamar/Harijan, Musahar, Dushad/Paswan, Tatma, Khatwe, Dhobi, Baantar, Chidimar, Dom, Halkhor	
Adivasi/Janajatis	4. <i>Newar</i>	4 Newar Newar	
	5. <i>Janajati</i>	5.1 Hill/Mountain Janajati Tamang, Kumal, Sunuwar, Majhi, Danuwar, Thami/Thangmi, Darai, Bhote, Baramu/Bramhu, Pahari, Kusunda, Raji, Raute, Chepang/Praja, Hayu, Magar, Chyantal, Rai, Sherpa, Bhujel/Gharti, Yakha, Thakali, Limbu, Lepcha, Bhote, Byansi, Jirel, Hyalmo, Walung, Gurung, Dura	
		5.2 Tarai Janajati Tharu, Jhangad, Dhanuk, Rajbanshi, Gangai, Santhal/Satar, Dhimal, Tajpuriya, Meche, Koche, Kisan, Munda, Kusbadiya/Patharkata, Unidentified Adivasi/Janajati	
Other	6. <i>Muslim</i>	6 Muslim Madhesi Muslim, Churoute (Hill Muslim)	
	7. <i>Other</i>	7 Other Marwari, Bangali, Jain, Punjabi/Sikh, Unidentified Others	